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World Reformation Activities of the Dark God — Loving Humans So Much, I Reincarnated in One —

Arc 7: Light God Hero

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Chapter 216: Knight General

I -Kuromiya Haine-have appeared before the Aurora Knight General in order to check his mood.

Milking favor.

“Knight General-sama, glad to see you are doing great today.” (Haine)

“Umu.”

“This Kuromiya Haine has come to check on your condition. This person of humble upbringing is truly honored to be in your presence. From today on, I will have a change of heart, and pledge eternal loyalty to the Aurora Knight corp’s General-sama.” (Haine)

“A pleasure to hear that.”

“If Knight General says so, I will jump into danger without second-guessing, and if Knight General-sama were to order me to fly, I will fly. I am the loyal servant of Knight General-sama. Please give me orders at any time and at any place. Knight General-sama is an existence akin to a God for me, and blah blah blah...” (Haine)

“Uhm...can you give it a break already?”

Well then, let’s spill the beans now.

The one in front of me is the new Aurora Knight General, Dillon Grades-san — the bald old man.

The first time we met was when he was a vice-captain and was in charge of the entrance exams for newcomers. After that, he brought a high-quality element measurement device —which is something that won’t be coming out to light—.

He has also treated me food a number of times and has helped me out a lot.

And now that Grades-san has been promoted.

He has mega-evolved from Vice-Captain into Knight General.

“Well, in reality, I have skipped several steps and am now standing at the top after all. It is not on the level of just being upgraded two classes.” (Grades)

It looks like Grades vice-captain –I mean, knight general– is actually happy about his promotion. His expression can’t lie.

Well, I don’t think there’s any need to explain it now that it has come to this point, but the reason of this big promotion was of course because of the fall of the previous Knight General, Zeberphon Dobbe.

At the new and old heroes match that occurred before where the whole world had divided in two sides -the pro-reconciliation side and the contra-reconciliation side-the

former Knight General Dobbe was in the contra side.

He tried to make the previous heroes team win by using a variety of means, but it in return became the proof of their injustice, and inevitably fell.

In normal circumstances, they would be discreet about this type of matters in order to wrap it up in a peaceful manner, but in Dobbe-san’s case, his usual behavior bit him back, and also, he picked on the wrong opponent.

A punishment that was harsher than the crimes he committed was placed upon him in a very natural manner, and was dismissed from his position as the Knight General on that very same day.

Well, in regards to Dobbe, it wasn’t only the foul plays at the previous and current heroes match, but there was also irrefutable evidence of embezzlement in the funds of the Aurora Knight corps, and had come to a point where he couldn’t even give excuses anymore.

Dobbe has blamed Karen-san in matters of her light hero duties since long ago.

The reason why he was so persistent in having Karen-san under his own supervision was because, after Karen-san had become the hero, the surveillance became tougher, making it hard to embezzle the funds, and so he wanted to break this deadlock.

But that truth was also made clear, thus, it not only made Dobbe be shot

down from his position as a knight general, it also marked the downfall of the distinguished Zeberphon family.

This rich boy, that had done whatever he wanted due to his family status, is now wandering at the roadside.

“Well, the Zeberphon household is a distinguished family that would enter the top ten in the Light Church. If there’s an attempt to bring it down, there will for sure be a ‘Hold it!’ somewhere.” (Grades)

“The so called ‘begging for their life’, right?” (Haine)

“The reason there was none of that and was immediately brought down was because by letting him do whatever he wanted in the previous and current heroes match, the trust of the people was dropped to the pits of hell. Gossips are truly scary. With this invisible power, it instantly shutted the mouth of the political power hungry zombies.” (Grades)

Being told this, it makes me think that the accumulated battles of Karen-san and the other heroes has been worth.

So the pains of that time have now been rewarded.

And now then, the former Aurora Knight General has stepped down from his post in an unsightly manner, and the one who has taken that spot is the one in front of me.

Former vice-captain Dillon Grades-san, 42 years old; a critical age. He is not from a famous household like the Zeberphon household. He is from a normal household, and has climbed up completely from sheer effort.

It is exactly because he knows about hardships that he can be considerate to others, and he does a lot for the newcomers and doesn’t just ignore the people doing gruntworks.

His ability as a light knight is also high, and in reality, he should have plenty enough ability to become a captain of his own platoon, but the reason why he still kept being a vice-captain for long was due to him not being from a special faction. There’s also the fact that Grades hates injustice, and his reputation with the ‘former’ high-ups of the knight corps was bad.

“Well, honestly speaking, I thought I wouldn’t climb up to being a captain anymore. You never know what life has in store for you.” (Grades)

“That’s because it wasn’t only Dobbe, the vice-captains and captains that were in cahoots with him were also fired after all.” (Haine)

In other words, people that were the same as Dobbe; pleasuring in the sweet syrup of their authority and sipping on it like crazy.

And Grades-san is the one that endured the loneliness and didn’t associate with them.

That’s probably the biggest reason he was chosen as the new Aurora Knight General.

“But isn’t that bad? Wiping out the higher-ups...isn’t that the basically the same as killing them all, leaving only a few personnel remaining? And due to this, they had no choice but to choose me as the highest post in responsibility?” (Grades)

“Did you think you were made the Knight General to have a fun time?” (Haine)

Our Light Founder-sama doesn’t have such a kind personality, you know.

“Yorishiro not only wants to clean the Aurora Knight corps, but the whole Light Church itself. In preparation for the Lord of the monsters that has recently appeared -the Demon Lords-, she plans on getting rid of the accumulated decay in the human world, and give a rebirth to the Light Church.” (Haine)

This is a preparation for the battle against the Demon Lords, as well as a step into creating a new world.

“So I have been chosen as the standard-bearer for the reformation of the Aurora Knight corps huh. My responsibility is big.” (Grades)

Saying this, the Knight General Grades rubs his trademark bald head.

“‘At my age, I don’t really care about promotions anymore’, is what I thought after all. Because of the friction at the top, I decided on just taking care of the little pups and, if possible, retire without any serious errors. But that plan has been deviated right at the very core.” (Grades)

“There’s only rough waves ahead, Grades-san.” (Haine)

“Can’t be helped. I became a light knight in order to be of use to others anyways. Now that it has come to this, I will do my best till my lights go out!” (Grades)

“Yoo~! A new brave warrior is born! The new light of hope of the Aurora Knight corps!” (Haine)

“Gahahaha! To commemorate this promotion of Knight General, how about we go eat ramen? Founder-sama should be able to forgive at least this amount of conceitedness, right? Haine! Accompany me! I can treat you all the toppings ya want!!” (Grades)

“Thank you very much! I will be enjoying it then!! I will follow the new Knight General!!” (Haine)

It must be because we are both men, hanging out with Grades is different from the grouping of Karen-san and the other heroes and it makes for a fun time everytime we do hang out.

Just like this, the unpleasant former Knight General left and the new fun Knight General has assumed the post. The knight corps are about to head to a new stage.

This is not a matter that is exclusive to the military divisions, but it is currently also the whole Light Church that’s trying to take off its old robes and changing into a new form.

Chapter 217: Reform

When one thing continues for long, a tear will surely appear somewhere.

This is a reality that occurs for anything and nothing can escape it.

Whether it is an individual, an organization, a living being, an object, no matter if they have form or not.

The things that are born in this world, no matter what it is, will not be able to maintain their shape as it originally was in the beginning. Most things will evolve into their own innate potential, and after it has evolved, it will slowly decay.

The organization that is the Light Church is no exception.

It has already been more than a thousand years since the church itself was established. Its time for development has long passed, and its slow stagnation has continued for a hundred to two hundred years already.

With such long stagnation, it is natural that it would rot. And a crooked person like Zeberphon Dobbe to be one of the people in control could be said to be a natural course of events.

There's two ways to change this flow of things. Destroy everything and begin with a new plate; or change it heavily without destroying everything.

That 'change it heavily' has been called 'reformation' since olden times. And in a big organization, in order to prolong its lifespan, there will always be an enlightening leader that will bring a big scale reformation.

The bones will scrape off their own rotten meat, and change it into a fresh organization.

And so, at present, the thing that is being done to the Light Church is exactly that.

The Hero Alliance being formed, Karen-san becoming the light hero; if you were to search for the origin of it, you would find many points that led to this.

However, the most direct one was the thing that made everything move.

The new and old heroes match that happened before.

“Squadron Captain Vesage, long time no see.” (Haine)

I once again came to visit a familiar person.

Since coming back from the old and new hero match to Apollon City, I have been doing this all the time.

Because practically all the people I know are being buried in work or have been promoted.

The Vesage-san here is the one who led the recruitment platoon that came to my village. If Karen-san had not stopped me that time, I might have beaten him up hard.

At that time, his rank was Platoon Captain.

Well, it wasn't that good of a beginning in our relationship, but after that, I also joined the Aurora Knight corps and temporarily worked together with him.

That Vesage-san has also been platoon captain for long, but he has been ranked up to a squadron captain.

“...What is it, assistant Haine?” (Vesage)

But now that I have actually met him in person, that Vesage was unexpectedly unfazed by the situation.

He has been promoted and his pay has gone up, so he should be filled with joy like General Grades.

“If you think that every single one of the people at the knight corps is able to keep up with this terrible shock, you are heavily mistaken. Even if you suddenly tell us ‘there will be a reformation!’, you know...” (Vesage)

Is what he said mixing in a sigh.

“They were people that weren't that neck deep into the contra-reconciliation side to be a target of being fired, even so, they are also people that weren't that displeased with the status quo to raise their hands in approval of a reformation. I fall in that same category. Now, imagine a person like me being thrown into

such a radical change. There's only uneasiness for the future, damn it..." (Vesage)

So there's people with that way of thinking huh.

In other words, the side that wants to maintain the status quo.

"But wasn't it a good change for Vesage-san? This is a promotion, you know? From platoon captain to squadron captain, so the money you are given should have increased by quite a lot as well, right?" (Haine)

We were already close enough to talk without any formalities.

"The responsibilities rise up equally though. If it was before the change, where I would only need to be a squadron captain that just had to stick to the customs, it would be a different story, but the knight corps will be having a stronger color of a combat force from now on, right? Honestly speaking, I feel like the pain simply increased. The position of squadron captain is weighing heavily on me!!" (Vesage)

This is not good.

Vesage-san was the type of person that wanted to maintain a stable and safe lifestyle by being in a low post. But because of the change, in this doctrine of prioritizing ability that will surely be coming, there will be the need to have all the members show more than a 100% of their effort.

For him, it would mean that this has become an incredibly hard to live world then?

No, that's a no go!

I want as many people as possible to be satisfied with the new structure that Karen-san and the others wish to make reality.

There should be something for Vesage to be happy about in this new structure!

"Right, now that I think about it, with the advance in the cooperation of the five Grand Churches, a new agreement was signed!" (Haine)

I decided to bring the conversation to a more harmless topic.

“Hm? Ah, the thing that is the closest related to me would be that the situation of the proselytization movements of the Water Church is in a better state now.” (Vesage)

Right.

The thing about the water hero Celestis using her idol activities to take in fans into the Water Church huh.

Originally, within the five Grand Churches, there was an agreement stating that ‘proselytization movements in the territory of another church is prohibited’, and yet, the proselytization movements of the Water Church and the idol activities of Celestis merged, there were raving fans increasing even within Apollon City, and it was difficult to control this for a while.

“But due to the cooperation of the five Grand Churches deepening, the Water Church have been doing well in self-restraining. To be more precise, the privileges that the Celestis fans would receive by joining the Water Church are now completely gone.” (Vesage)

In other words, the Water nation and the Celestis fans have been completely separated.

In the first place, Celestis being marketed in that kind of way was because of the Water God Coacervate who plays with humans like they are toys.

Now that their connection with Coacervate has been severed by me, the Water Founder returning the state to normalcy was a natural thing to occur.

“Thanks to that, the idol activities of Celestis have stopped with only being in the sightseeing city of Hydra Ville and was completely separated from the Water Church. The person herself was happy that her job now has nothing to do with propaganda and is now able to act more freely though...” (Haine)

“And because of this, we can’t confiscate idol goods anymore. Really...DAMN IT!” (Vesage)

Hm?

Can’t confiscate anymore?

Could it be that the real reason Vesage is so dispirited is because...

“How am I going to gather Celes-tan goods now?” (Vesage)

This guy, he was embezzling idol goods in the guise of confiscation!!!

He has been giving off the aura of a mummy since before, but to think that it was because he had fallen so low into the idol hell! No, the idol brat path?!

“No, wait... From now on, it will be the era of cooperation. We will be getting along better with the Water Church. That means...the contact between Celes-tan and the Light Church will increase?!” (Vesage)

Ah, he is a goner.

Vesage has found new hope to live for.

“I thought it would be impossible until now, but Celes-tan having a live performance in Apollon City might be possible! Celes-tan in the flesh, a handshake in the flesh! It might be possible!” (Vesage)

Or more like, that idol hero has been coming here frequently to hang out since the time she became friends with Karen-san.

Has he not passed by her coincidentally?

“Also, Celes-tan is a hero!” (Vesage)

“Her main job is being a hero...probably.” (Haine)

“And a hero is a position that leads the church’s military force, so if the cooperation continues, the connection they have with the Aurora Knights will naturally increase. In other words, the chances of me meeting Celes-tan in the flesh will increase! Okay! Lights on!” (Vesage)

Is that so.

“Haine! I will do it! In the past, only the famous households had the important posts, but now with the reformation, the more achievements you accumulate, the closer you get to important posts! And if possible, I want a post that is the closest to other churches. Get closer to Celes-tan, and maybe...!

Fuhahahahaha!!” (Vesage)

He is having a delusion typical of a fan.

Well, the era is changing, so dreaming things that can’t be reached is nice.

Even if that dream is to climb to the top of the heavens.

So Vesage managed to accept the blessings that the reformation brings.

Good, good.

For now, when I meet Celestis later, I will warn her that: 'the guy named Vesage is dangerous, so make sure not to get close to him'.

Chapter 218: One unnecessary person

The reformation of the Light Church was proceeding at full peak.

This was possible because we managed to take all the decaying cliques out.

With the dismissal of Zeberphon Dobbe as the first one, the Light Church has been cleansed from the old factions that obtained unjust profits.

Bribing, embezzlement, fund reflux, profit forging, tax evasion, and many others.

The people that earned a huge fortune using the old system would obviously object at changing that system. It is basically saying that they won't be able to get the money they could have gotten after all.

That's why the Founder Yorishiro was so aggressive in the new and old heroes match. The Founders had taken a confrontational stance.

The objective was simple. Make a list of the people that are against the Hero Alliance. At the very least, that was the objective of Yorishiro in that new and old heroes match.

And so, that objective was accomplished with flying colors, and the faction that was against the Hero Alliance were brought out to light one after the other, and were exiled from their post.

The purification of the Light Church was proceeding smoothly, and it looked as if it would continue without any problems.

But there was still one big problem remaining...

"I am back~."

After I finished checking out the state of my friends, I had returned to the Light Church's parlor room.

This is a place that only a handful of people are allowed to enter. The true definition of a sacred precinct.

I sat at one of the seats in the parlor room, and in there, there were four dazzling beauties lined up.

The first one is the Light Founder, Yorishiro; the second one is the light hero, Karen-san; the third one is the personal bodyguard of Yorishiro and the shadow hero, Doraha.

That line up is still fine.

The problem is the fourth one; well, you could say it is a problem.

“Welcome back, Haine-san.”

The one who welcomed me was the previous light hero, Sunnysol Ates.

What is this woman doing together with Karen-san and Yorishiro, and nonchalantly enjoying tea?

“How was it? Do you think the lower-class people, that have risen to new positions, will be able to be of help to Yorishiro-sama?” (Ates)

“Uhm, well...” (Haine)

Ates who could be said to be in the opposite faction of Yorishiro is now here. Why is that?

The reason itself is the very representation of why this woman is so scary.

If I had to put it in words, it would be that she betrayed them. She betrayed the contra-reconciliation side that were aiming for the same objective as her.

The contra-reconciliation side heavily relied on this woman, and in terms of fame, she would be able to go against Karen-san and Yorishiro.

But in the new and old hero match, Ates threw them away into the fire the moment the victory of the current heroes was certain. And so, the information of the contra-reconciliation side that were her comrades had been given to Yorishiro.

She was apprehended at that time, but she was soon released.

That’s because the list that Ates had provided was completely accurate.

The reason why the cleaning of Yorishiro is proceeding at surprising speed is mostly because the information that Ates gave had helped out.

In other words, the contra-reconciliation side was sold out completely.

“...Knight General Grades and Captain Vesage were more energetic than expected at the prospect of the new Light Church that will come to fruition after the reformation. It looks like they have found their own role.” (Haine)

“That’s great. In order to make the new Light Church flourish, there’s the need for the lower-classes to step it up. Let’s use them to their best.” (Ates)

Ates was talking as if she were the helmsman of the Light Church.

Karen-san and Yorishiro haven’t spoken a single word yet.

“Now now, Haine-san, you must have been tired from walking all around the place, right? As a show of appreciation, how about some tea I made?” (Ates)

“No thanks, I already ate ramen with Grades-san...” (Haine)

Also, the gaze that was nailed at me was silently telling me ‘don’t get deceived by someone like Ates’ as it puts pressure on me.

...Ates was acting as if she were the leader of this Light Church since long ago—completely disregarding the actual leader, Yorishiro.

“Please give it a break already!” (Karen)

And finally, unable to bear it with only a gaze, Karen-san raises her voice.

“I have endured it until now, but I can’t stay silent anymore! What is with you?! Why are you here as if it were natural?!” (Karen)

Karen-san was giving such sound questions that I couldn’t even speak. It seems I was the only one in that state though.

“You appeared saying that you were against the Hero Alliance. You even created a battle in order to push your ideology! And yet, you still staying here after that matter is over is way too unsightly!” (Karen)

“The situation has changed.” (Ates)

In contrast to Karen-san’s anger and heat, Ates had a cool expression as she sipped on her tea.

“Right now, the world is in a situation that hasn’t been seen before. The Demon Lords, that wouldn’t be an exaggeration to call as the strongest

monsters to ever be encountered, have declared that they will be eradicating humans, and the humans can't avoid that full-on confrontation." (Ates)

Ates pours more tea into her finished cup.

Seeing her taking her sweet time to pour it as if trying to make the taste as deep as possible was annoying to watch.

"That's why the humans have to concentrate their whole fighting force. I - Sunnysol Ates-may not amount to much, but as the previous light hero, I plan on providing my strength to the Light Church." (Ates)

"We don't need your strength." (Karen)

Karen-san flatly refuses her.

"I am the current light hero. I will repel the Demon Lords with my strength. There's no need for your help." (Karen)

"Ara ara, what a stubborn little kitty." (Ates)

Ates giggles and stands up from her seat.

"In that case, I will be taking my leave for now. This is a joint struggle, so if we don't have our hearts as one, it won't show any effect." (Ates)

"Eh?!"

"In the time I am not here, please teach this selfish girl how reality works, Yorishiro-sama. That in order to obtain results, there are times when you need to join hands even with your most hated nemesis." (Ates)

She takes one sip of the tea she had poured just now, and then, presents it to the Founder.

"No matter how cornered in distress we are, I think that we shouldn't lose our character though." (Yorishiro)

The words of Yorishiro seemed like they were completely rejecting Ates.

Ates didn't answer to that and simply leaves with a faint smile.

While leaving a bitterness in the parlor room that is normally used for friendly chats.

Chapter 219: A specter that can't be exorcised

“Yorishiro-sama!!” (Karen)

The moment Sunnysol Ates left, the parlor room grows stormy.

“Why?! Why did you invite such a person into the Light Grand Church?! If a person like that roams around, I can't even calm down to have tea!” (Karen)

The hostility Karen-san had towards Ates was way too bare. To a point that it is hard to think of considering how she normally is.

Karen-san is the type that doesn't hate people at all -but Ates is an exception.

Why does she have such raw hate for her? I can't even imagine it.

“The situation has changed.” (Yorishiro)

From the mouth of Yorishiro, the same words as Ates came out.

“I am displeased by it, but there's no other choice but to accept it.” (Yorishiro)

“Are you saying that person is necessary in our fighting force? In order to defeat the Demon Lords? There's no need! I will defeat the Demon Lords!”
(Karen)

Changing the target to Yorishiro, the exact same conversation from before is repeated.

“...Also, in our Light Church, there's Doraha-san. The other churches are looking towards a stance of using the previous heroes and current ones in order to make a formation of attack and defense, but we can allot those roles with Doraha-san and I. There's no need for the help of such a person!” (Karen)

The one who is always silently following Yorishiro like a shadow, Doraha.

She was the shadow hero of the past Dark Underworld Country. And that ability of hers doesn't fall to any present hero.

In reality, there was a case when Karen-san was able to travel faraway by having Doraha protect Apollon City after all. She is a reliable ally.

“It is better to have as many allies as possible. Is that the kind of logic that is

at work here?” (Haine)

Is what I add in a mutter.

“In that case, we also have Haine-san on our side! The Light Church has plenty enough military power!” (Karen)

Is what she answered back sharply.

“That’s not the problem here.” (Yorishiro)

Without faltering at the behavior of the hero, Yorishiro sips her tea –the tea that Ates had poured for her.

“Sunnysol Ates; she is, as expected, a fearsome person. She meticulously created a scenario where we can’t reject her staying at our side.” (Yorishiro)

“That is?” (Karen)

“You already know about what she presented to us in order to fall onto us, right?” (Yorishiro)

At the end of the new and old heroes match, that wicked woman pointed out one thing as she admitted her own defeat. That thing was the member list of the contra-reconciliation side that was confronting Yorishiro and the others.

It could be said to be the very objective they wanted to achieve with the new and old heroes match.

“Not only was the list of Ates the real deal, they were quite the excellent documents. It didn’t only have the contra-reconciliation side members of the Light Church, there were also even people from other churches in it without leaving a single one out. There was even material listed there to charge the person in question.” (Yorishiro)

“Then, the reason why the purging of the contra-reconciliation side is going at speeds that are higher than expected is because...” (Karen)

“It is all due to the list Ates-san provided. She must have obtained that list from the contra-reconciliation side thinking that they would be able to utilize the previous heroes more efficiently this way, but in the end, it turned into tightening their noose.” (Yorishiro)

Truly reaping what they sow.

“But that doesn’t mean it is okay to accept her!” (Karen)

Karen-san still continues protesting.

“The moment she changed sides, our victory had been decided. Even without her information, the fall of the contra-reconciliation side was settled. There’s no need to lower ourselves to aim for a perfect victory—” (Karen)

“On top of that, Ates-san is the previous hero.” (Yorishiro)

Interrupting Karen-san, Yorishiro continues.

“Please don’t forget, Karen-san. The trust that you heroes create is immense. The achievements of you people nowadays has made that image even bigger and more heated up. And the previous hero Ates-san has served in the amplification of it.” (Yorishiro)

The previous light hero, Ates.

In the point of heroes, Karen-san and Ates are the same.

The efforts of Karen-san have made it so that popularity of the heroes increases more and more within the common populace. And from the perspective of the people that don’t know anything, Ates is also a previous hero and in the same spot as Karen-san and the others.

She is in a territory of popularity.

“No way, I am not the same as that person!” (Karen)

“In the eyes of the uninformed public, you are the same. As long as you hold the title of hero, the gossips that come out from that title will become our greatest weapon.” (Yorishiro)

It is exactly because Karen-san and the others held the title of heroes as they defeated monsters that the image of heroes has been strengthened even more and it was possible to have the populace side with us.

It is a reality that this has provided propulsion to the reconciliation of the churches and the Hero Alliance.

That popularity had also fallen onto Ates who holds the title of ‘previous light

hero' which make them view her as a symbol of trust and hope.

The contra-reconciliation side might have been played by that mask of popularity as well.

"Let's put it this way. What do you think would happen if Ates-san were to be judged in front of the populace? 'Even if they are heroes, in the end, they are still humans. They make mistakes and will also do evil', is what they will begin thinking. Karen-san, the trust to heroes that you so desperately fostered might be destroyed." (Yorishiro)

"That's..." (Karen)

"Also, most of all, if we are to judge Ates-san, we can't just not do anything to the other previous heroes. 'They went against the present order', this point is something that all previous heroes share after all. Even if we don't give out punishment on the same level as Ates-san on the same grounds, it will be impossible to avoid giving punishment to the others." (Yorishiro)

Kyouka, Sarasa, Yoneko-san, and Juo; the other previous heroes.

After the battle, we reached an understanding, and now, they are powerful allies that we can't not have.

In order to eliminate Ates, we would have to bring down all those girls as well?

There's no way we could do that.

"You understand now, right Karen-san? That woman gathered several merits and demerits in order to have us accept it. Of course, there's not a single reason why I would like her to be our ally. However, leaving aside the like and dislikes, she has already sealed the path to refuse." (Yorishiro)

"..."

Karen-san finally was unable to say anything back.

"In other words, we have been thoroughly caught in that woman's scheme."
(Karen)

"Yes, we have been." (Yorishiro)

Yorishiro unexpectedly admitted it easily.

“She made it so we had no choice but to accept her as an ally. In that point, I will obediently accept defeat. If not, I wouldn’t be able to see the truly important things after all.” (Yorishiro)

“The truly...important things?” (Karen)

“Just like Ates-san said, we are in a stage where a battle against the Demon Lords with our existence at stake has grown unavoidable. Compared to the disasters called Demon Lords, Ates-san is simply one more of the people that think of political power. The extent of damage she can do is limited.” (Yorishiro)

Meaning that compared to the survival of humanity, this is a small evil that we have to close our eyes to huh.

Rather, if there’s merits in utilizing this small evil, it would be better to use it to its best in order to prepare for that big evil.

“Is that really the case?”

That voice made Karen-san, Yorishiro, and I gather our eyes in the direction of it.

The one who spoke was Doraha.

She didn’t speak much, just like a shadow, and there’s practically no instances she has spoken herself.

While being crushed by agitation, Yorishiro asks back.

“What’s the matter, Doraha? What’s this about ‘really the case’?” (Yorishiro)

“No, I was just wondering if that Ates-sama person is truly that much of a dismissable person.” (Doraha)

And it was rare for her to evaluate other people in that way.

Yorishiro lovingly hugs Doraha.

“It is okay. There’s no need for you to think of such complicated things. I will continue protecting your place to be. You don’t need to worry about anything and just enjoy your time as much as you want.” (Yorishiro)

The reason why Yorishiro doesn’t want to burden Doraha is due to their

special relationship.

But at a later time, I began thinking that at this point, it wasn't only Doraha who had seen through the core of Ates.

Chapter 220: Everyday encroachment

We might have actually been too easygoing.

Even if roundabout, we were underestimating the fearsomeness of the woman that was surely eating onto our lifestyle and melting it into destruction.

This place is the Aurora Knight corps training location.

She was surrounded by many knight, moreover, they were having a friendly chat.

There was even the new Knight General Grades-san.

“Oh Haine, you came at a good time! Come here too!” (Grades)

The bald Grades-san calls for me.

Even when he became the General, he didn’t just relax in his extravagant room and is always going around.

The reason why he is currently looking after the training of the newcomers is because he has been talking with the higher-ups of the knights corps about the reformation plan, negotiating with the outside, and he is presently having a rest in his busy time.

And then, there’s one other beautiful lady joining the instruction of the newcomers.

“The two most important points when utilizing light divine power is the release and convergence.”

She swings around her light spear, Kain, as if acting it out while saying that.

The light knights were enthusiastically listening to her teaching.

“Unleashing your power at once ‘release’; properly directing that power to the direction you thought of ‘convergence’. The light divine power makes it possible for these two types to be controlled. If you just release leaving it all to power, that can be done by the thoughtless fire element. If you give that

release a set direction and make it as thin as a needle..." (Ates)

The light spear is directed at a certain direction as if adjusting the aim, and then, the pointy blade part begins to shine dazzlingly.

“[Holy Light Line]!” (Ates)

The thing that felt as if the tip of the spear had extended was actually a line shaped light divine power.

This beam that was unleashed from the spear felt as if it had extended as it hit the target that is far at the distance and pierces through it.

A small hole is made into the target made of wood. It was practically as if the spear itself had pierced through it.

There's no way someone would be able to manage such sharp penetration power unless their convergence ability is quite high.

““““0000hhhh!!””””””””””

The light knights that were spectating this began to cheer and applaud.

“The trick to controlling release and convergence is to adjust your breathing. And then, at the same time as you breathe out, you release. Think of your divine tool as a part of your body, and control it with your whole body.” (Ates)

I see, I see.

This wasn't only limited to light, it also applied to all the divine power control, so there were parts that I can understand since I am a dark matter user.

“She is quite skilled. Not only are her explanations good, she also properly shows example. Even within the people I have seen, she is one of the best instructors.” (Grades)

Since before he was appointed as the Knight General, in his times when he was a vice-captain, he has been supporting the Aurora Knight corps for close to 20 years already.

And she is being praised by the General Grades, so she must be quite the big deal.

“Ates-sama returning to us is, as expected, something worth celebrating.

Simply having two hero class powers would be a great help, but even without counting that, Ates-sama is a really well-rounded person.” (Grades)

“R-Really?” (Haine)

“She was able to do anything without any problem since her active days, and her attention to the people below her was meticulous. It was quite regrettable that she had to retire after being involved in the previous coup. Well, I was an underling at that time, so there was nothing I could have done though.” (Grades)

Grades hadn’t been told anything about the circumstances behind the reason why Ates was made to retire as a hero.

Well, that’s a matter of course. I also don’t know much about it, but the troubles that revolve around the retirement of Ates as a hero were on the level of scandal for the Light Church.

In that case, they should have wanted to reduce the turmoil to its most. The fewer people knowing the truth of it, the better.

Grades-san most likely wasn’t able to do anything but spectate, just like many others.

“Uhm...” (Haine)

“Hm? What is it, Haine?” (Grades)

“I wasn’t at that time, so I don’t know but, what was the reaction of the public when Ates-san retired?” (Haine)

Is what I try asking about the state of those times, and he answered.

“They were all sympathetic. Ates-sama had to retire because of that damn former Founder after all.” (Grades)

“Is that so...” (Haine)

“Yorishiro-sama who was simply the daughter of the Founder at that time exposed the illegal actions of her father, and an uproar big enough to turnaround Apollon City occurred. It was a big mayhem everyday with strikes after strikes.” (Grades)

Even when the matter wasn't fully disclosed, it still dealt this much damage.

"It is because the previous Founder was a piece of shit idiot, but even when he was like that, he still stayed being the Founder, but that came to bite him back at that time, and he ended up being apprehended. If he had pulled back earlier, he could have maintained a bit of his freedom. Truly an idiot." (Grades)

And there was also a smart one.

It is of course, Ates.

"At that time, Ates-sama had retired on her own will. 'I can't escape from the sin of not being able to stop the rampage of the Founder even when I stood as the hero', she said. Yorishiro-sama tried to stop her, but she apparently didn't accept." (Grades)

"..."

This is the darkness of the political world.

In other words, for the many light citizens, the previous light hero Ates was the heroine of a tragedy where she was dragged into political injustice.

And now, with the new and old heroes match before, her long time in retirement has finished and she has now come back.

For the normal populace of the Light nation, the return of Ates was exactly that.

They had their arms high up in welcome.

The cleaning of corruption is also shrouded in haziness, so aside from the current ones at high positions, most of the people don't know the truth of things.

Ironically, this is working as tailwind for the current Ates.

Sunnysol Ates had become quite the popular person in the Light Church.

"Ah, Karen-sama!"

At that moment, the current light hero walks by.

Seeing her, the light knights went to speak with her resolutely.

“Karen-sama! Right now we are having a group lesson with Ates-sama as the instructor!”

“If possible, can Karen-sama please instruct us as well?!”

But the expression of Karen-san wasn't that of sparkles.

“...Sorry. I have to attend to my own training, so I will have to refrain.” (Karen)

“Eh?”

And just like that, Karen-san disappears into the inside of the training field.

The young light knights were bewildered by this.

“What happened to Karen-sama?”

“Was Karen-sama that kind of person? I feel like in the past she was a lot more kind and easy to mingle with...”

The unrest was spreading around the newcomers.

At that time...

“Calm down.”

The one who spoke in order to pacify them was Ates.

“Don't blame Karen-san. She is a person of bountiful talent. Her inborn light element is one that someone like me wouldn't be able to even come close to her toes.” (Ates)

“Ates-sama...”

“That person is using that talent of hers in order to stand as the vanguard of the Light Church and fulfill an important duty. The duty of you people is to support Karen-san from below. For that sake, you need to grow stronger.” (Ates)

“““““Yes!”””””

The young light knights respond filled with energy.

I thought 'this is bad' at the exchange they were having.

“Wait.” (Haine)

Unable to endure it, I stand on the stage.

“That way of saying it would bring about misunderstandings. It is as if Karen-san became strong just because of her talent.” (Haine)

“Oh my.” (Ates)

“That person as well has put in suitable amounts of effort in order to become strong. Negating that truth is not worth of praise at all.” (Haine)

Ates protected Karen-san...is how it looked like, but that wasn't the case.

She had created the impression that Karen-san is a person filled with talent, and was trying to separate Karen-san from the common knights.

Geniuses get avoided by the commoners.

By inducing into the knights that Karen-san is a genius that can't be understood, it will create an isolation on Karen-san, and she will manage to obtain a higher position within the knight corps.

The silent invasion of Ates still continued on even now.

As I thought, this woman is dangerous.

Chapter 221: Hero's torment

But more than that, what worried me more was the behaviour of Karen-san.

What was that cold rejection towards the knights just now?

That is something incredibly unthinkable from the Karen-san I know.

I was so bothered by the unsuitable attitude of Karen-san that I felt I had to keep my dealing with Ates to a reasonable extent and chase after Karen-san.

I slip through the light knight corps' practice location and head towards the place where Karen-san left to. Inside a forest that is outside from the area of the Light Grand Church, there was an open space that even felt out of place.

This place is the long-distance sniping space that was specially made for the wind hero Hyue.

At the time when Hyue came to visit, this is what was made; a place that no one uses since the time Hyue returned to Rudras Metropolis...is how it should have been, but.....at that place, Karen-san had unsheathed her holy sword and brandished it directly at the sky.

“...[Holy Light Bisection]” (Karen)

A dazzling light was released from the blade, and the light sword slowly become bigger, longer.

It was a completely different technique from the long 'Holy Light Line' that is released as a distance attack. Making the holy sword's blade itself grow bigger with the light divine power is the new ultimate technique of Karen-san; the 'Holy Light Bisection'.

But...

“Kugh!”

The light blade that had been gigantified became small specs of light and disperse.

When that happens, the big light sword will obviously lose its volume and become smaller.

In reality, the big light sword of Karen-san can only increase by a limit and completely stops growing anymore from that.

“Gunuuuuu!!” (Karen)

But even with that, from what I see in Karen-san’s expression, she is still trying to put in more power in order to make it bigger, but in reality, it isn’t following her wishes.

At Rudras Metropolis, she had sliced the giant slime in two with a single stroke from that technique...but at that time, it wasn’t a technique that Karen-san managed to do alone...

“...Ah, Haine-san.” (Karen)

She must have given up for now.

She dispersed all the light blade that came out from the holy sword and returned to simply being a sword.

“I have shown you an embarrassing sight. ‘Holy Light Bisection’ is still not in a territory that can be called completed.” (Karen)

At the time in Rudras Metropolis, she managed to maintain that giant light blade, but the reason for that was not the achievement of Karen-san only, but because of the cooperation of one other person. That person is Sunnysol Ates who had lent her power to succeed in the making of the ‘Holy Light Bisection’.

“Release and convergence; utilizing these two originally opposing concepts at the same time, moreover, it has to be at the best of its capabilities, or the ‘Holy Light Bisection’ won’t succeed. In Rudras Metropolis, I managed the release, while Ates-sama dealt with the convergence. By dividing the work, we managed to form the giant light sword.” (Karen)

Karen-san says this with a pained expression.

“But that’s not good! I have to learn how to do ‘Holy Light Bisection’ by myself without requiring the help of such a person!” (Karen)

And that’s the reason for today’s training huh.

It is true that Karen-san is blessed with talent, but she definitely isn’t only described with just that. She is always unable to be satisfied with the current

state and puts effort in climbing up to the next step.

But today, that looked way too painful.

“There’s no need to blame yourself that much. From what I see, it doesn’t look like a problem that can be resolved in one go, so how about taking your time in progressing?” (Haine)

The reason why I followed-up by saying this was because it was clear to my eyes that Karen-san was hurrying.

It is because she was so in a hurry that she neglected her answers on the knights and ended up giving a cold impression.

Taking out the impatience in her heart is also part of my duty.

But...

“That’s no good!!” (Karen)

Karen-san rejected it a lot more fervently than I thought.

As I thought, she is acting weird. She is losing her usual self.

“I have to...I have to become stronger no matter what! Complete ‘Holy Light Bisection’ and also increase the power of my other abilities! But that’s just not enough at all.” (Karen)

Ah.

“In order to defeat those Demon Lords...” (Karen)

Right.

Karen-san and the others have already met them.

They are the strongest of existences that can’t even be compared to any of the monsters until now.

The Wind Demon Lord Raphael; Earth Demon Lord Uriel; Water Demon Lord Gabriel; Fire Demon Lord Michael; the power of the four Demon Lords surpassed by far what we expected.

A single Demon Lord would probably easily defeat all the heroes, and the proof of that is the fact that, with a single glare, the movements of Karen-san

and the others were completely sealed.

“We are heroes! We have to fight those Demon Lords and come out victorious. In order to do that, I have to become more more more more!”
(Karen)

So she needs power huh.

It is not only Karen-san. Mirack, Celestis, Sasae-chan, Hyue; all the current heroes have felt the difference in the wall that stands before them and they are apparently all training in their own cities —with the previous heroes as partners.

Mirack and Celestis, who habitually came here to hang out when they found the time, have not shown themselves lately because of that reason.

“I see.” (Haine)

Karen-san acting strange lately wasn’t only because of Ates alone.

In the face of these giant and powerful enemies that are the Demon Lords, it can’t be helped that she would end up stiffening her body.

“...Training by yourself will not be good enough, right?” (Haine)

It would be easy to untie the permeating danger of Ates and maintain the support of the knights, however, what has to be done for Karen-san who is trying to face the threat of the Demon Lords on her own is another completely different thing.

An act of kindness.

If Karen-san is going to valiantly stand to face that threat, I will also stand by the side of Karen-san and advance together with her.

“I will be your training partner.” (Haine)

“Eh? Uhm, but...!” (Karen)

It looks like Karen-san was terribly flustered by these words.

“It is fine. Just think of me as a Demon Lord and attack me with all you have! It might even relief stress. Two birds with one stone, don’t you think?” (Haine)

“T-Then...[Holy Light Blade]!” (Karen)

A light slash is released from Karen-san's holy sword.

It was one attack, however, I have my invincible dark matter—ah.

“Buaaaaagh~~!!!” (Haine)

“Haine-san?!” (Karen)

Being hit by the light blade, I was send flying.

Right, I completely forgot.

The only weakness of my dark matter; it is completely powerless against light divine power.

“That's why I asked if it was okay! Haine-san, are you okay?! Haine-san? Haine-saaaaann!!” (Karen) <Snaaaake!>

I am alive, but I was blown faraway by that light divine power.

How pathetic.

To think that I, as the assistant of Karen-san, am not even able to serve as a practice partner for her.

Chapter 222: Home Visit

“Aaah! How pathetic!!”

In the end, after that, I passed my time watching the training of Karen-san from the side.

Even when I have the darkness power that’s supposedly the strongest of all, I can’t even give advice to Karen-san in how to grow that light power of hers.

I also finished my duties for the day and returned.

The place I am currently residing at in Apollon City is at the public housing area that is under the direct management of the Light Church.

I was lent one of the rooms and was living alone.

I opened it with my key and enter the room.

When I turn on the ethereal-powered lights, the night became bright like morning.

“ ... ”

It is night, but I am not hungry yet.

Let’s take a bath first and get refreshed.

“Fill up the bathtub and...” (Haine)

Since coming to the big city, I have been surprised by a number of things, but one of those is that when I turn the faucet, warm water comes out on its own.

In the time I was at my village, we would have to go to the well, or do a round trip to the river in order to fill up the bathtub.

Maintained sewers, pumps that one can draw water from in the residential areas, machines that heat up the water; everything has been made possible thanks to ethereal, and they move due to ethereal.

What a splendid civilization.

To tell the truth, since coming to Apollon City, I have still found time to go back to my village once every month, but one day, I want mother and father to come here and sightsee the city or something.

“Oh, the hot water has been filled up.” (Haine)

I take off my clothes and enter the bathroom. After washing off the dust at the shower, I enter the bathtub.

“Fuh~~~.” (Haine)

I let out a voice cause of the pleasing sensation.

...

.....It may sound peaceful at a glance, however, the future prospects are pretty grim.

The battle against the Demon Lords that will be approaching, Ates who is slowly increasing her sympathizers inside the Light Church; internal falling must be used to refer to this.

The problem of the Demon Lords is especially serious.

The reformation of the churches is advancing fast and we are in the middle of removing the useless things and increasing the important fighting forces, but even with that, I really can't imagine being able to do something about those Demon Lords.

In terms of the individual strength of the heroes, for example; even if Karen-san were to perfect her 'Holy Light Bisection', what will occur? Uriel who was acting as the core of the giant Slime had stopped the 'Holy Light Bisection' of Karen-san and Ates with only his pinky finger.

The difference is way too wide.

No matter what kind of countermeasures we take, I don't feel like that difference can be filled.

And what would happen if the heroes...the humans can't defeat the Demon Lords? The objective they have of 'eradicating humans' will be accomplished. That's what will happen.

The heroes, who are the ones that have actually encountered the Demon Lords, are probably the only ones who have felt this truth, this future, and are growing impatient.

Ending up contrasting from the many people that are in joy for the sense of release of this reformation is something that can't be helped.

“ ... ”

I couldn't find an end to my thoughts as I sink myself in the bathtub.

Demon Lords; this abnormal factors that have surpassed the structure of us Gods.

Monsters, in a sense, could be considered the villains that the Gods created in order to increase the faith of humans towards Gods, and because of that, their natural instinct is to attack humans.

That's why, even if they attack humans, they wouldn't eradicate humans. If they were to do that, the Gods themselves who prepared the monsters wouldn't be able to obtain faith and it would trouble them.

And yet, the Demon Lords hold the objective of 'eradicating humanity'.

That would mean monsters have escaped from the strings of Gods.

It would mean that they obtained a will as living beings.

For a God, the evolution of a living being -no matter if it is not humanis something worth celebrating, but if what comes as a result of that is a battle for supremacy against humans, I can't just silently ignore it.

“ ... ”

In the first place, my objective was to eliminate the monsters, but that was because they were simply the puppets of the Gods without heart or soul - pseudo living beings-so I had no hesitation. So this is a troubling point on its own.

Leaving that aside, the current problem is that if we want to win against the Demon Lords, the most direct approach would be for me to personally act.

No matter how big of an opponent it is, as long as they are within the

boundaries of the four basic elements, they can't be opponents of I -the Dark God.

The other day when we faced the four Demon Lords, I didn't feel like I would lose.

But the problems is that they also knew that. And by accepting that truth, they planned around it. That is an incredibly big problem.

What the monsters we encountered until now didn't have; intelligence.

The Demon Lords having that will make the fights from now on really hard.

As long as they know that they can't win upfront, the Demon Lords will definitely not appear before me. They will stay hidden in this wide world, and will keep their presence low until a decisive moment arrives.

In reality, I should have left the Light capital immediately and left for a journey to subjugate them, but finding those hidden guys in that way would be next to impossible. On the contrary, if the Demon Lords were to attack the cities in the opening where I am not there, that in itself would be terrible.

And so, it is currently in a mortifying situation where staying in the city is currently the best option.

"...The hot water has turned lukewarm while I was thinking." (Haine)

Looks like I have been thinking for long.

Well then, let's leave the bath and do some preparations for dinner.

"Ara, are you already done?"

When suddenly, a voice sounded, making my heart jump.

"Uooaah?!"

Why?!

This should be my personal room! There shouldn't be anyone else aside from me!

But a voice actually sounded! It wasn't my imagination!

Scary!

I wasn't told at all that this was a haunted room! Is this the type of room that when you take off the wallpapers you will find uncountable hand blood-prints all over the place?!

"Please calm down, it is me."

"Eh?"

"It is Ates."

Huh?

By the time I noticed, beside the bathtub, there was a woman brimming with allure that was covered with only a bath towel.

That woman was, without doubt, Sunnysol Ates.

"I wanted to meet you, so I have infiltrated here." (Ates)

Chapter 223: Crawling into the bath

“Why are you here?” (Haine)

At my room, in my bath.

The one who appeared in there as if natural was Sunnysol Ates. I send her sharp words.

“Ara, this is the bath, so it is a matter of course to be naked.” (Ates)

Is what Ates said as she fixes the bath towel that was barely covering her body. Just that, I could see for a second what was hidden behind that bath towel. Or more like, I felt like it was an intentional provocation.

“That’s not what I meant with that question. Or more like, how did you turn around the question into that?!” (Haine)

What I want to hear is the reason as to why you are invading my room without prior appointment.

And her objective behind it.

“You want to hear it? Then, first, can you please let me in the bathtub?” (Ates)

“Why?!” (Haine)

“Because if I leave naked like this without entering the warm water, I will freeze so much I would catch a cold. Let’s have a nice long talk as we enjoy the warm water together.” (Ates)

Isn’t it fine to just talk after I leave the bathtub?!

But that stupid Ates seems like she didn’t intend to hear my answer from the very beginning, and had plunged those lustrous legs into the bathtub!

First one leg, then the other!

“W-Wait! This is a room for one! And the bathtub was made with that in consideration, so the size is for one as well! There’s no way two people can enter at the same time—and she is not listening at all! Stop it! This is too

cramped! Many soft things are hitting!!” (Haine)

What’s with this aggressive woman!

In just a short moment, the bathtub for one was stuffed up.

“Fuh~, as I thought, having company in the bath is nice.” (Ates)

Saying this, Ates takes out a cloth-like thing from inside the bathtub and throws it away.

“Wait a moment! What did you throw away just now?!” (Haine)

“The bath towel. Having a bath towel on inside the bathtub would be a lack of etiquette.” (Ates)

“Rather than etiquette, you should be worrying about trespassing private property!!” (Haine)

‘The problem would be resolved if you just leave the bathtub, right?’, is what I felt a voice was telling me.

But I want you to think about this.

The moment I leave the bathtub, the woman in front of me would inevitably be facing straight at something unsightly and things would get unsightly.

And so, I can’t move!

“Kuromiya Haine-san, I wanted to speak with you alone.” (Ates)

“Huh?” (Haine)

“The secret weapon that the Light Church possesses. The user of a mysterious power that doesn’t relate to Earth, Water, Fire, Wind, or Light; and boasts invincible power. The many giant monsters that have been defeated until now, in every instance that this happened in the five Grand Churches, you were present.” (Ates)

“...What are you talking about?” (Haine)

For now, I try to feign ignorance.

“Karen-san playing an active role as a hero and Yorishiro-sama’s status as a Founder growing rockfirm were also because you supported them from the

shadows. And so, I have something to consult you about.” (Ates)

Ates continues.

“Won’t you change from them to me?” (Ates)

In a sense, they were words I expected.

“What would come out of doing that?” (Haine)

“I would say, the situation would be slightly better than now. Haine-san, in the times when a group of thousands to millions are going to fight, what do you think is the thing that is needed the most?” (Ates)

“If you want to play riddles, do that elsewhere.” (Haine)

Answering questions itself is jumping into the pace of the other party.

“What a cold person. Well then, allow me to answer. An excelling leader.”
(Ates)

“As I said, I have no intentions of listening to what you have to say.” (Haine)

“The Light Church that has expanded to the level of a nation; the Aurora Knight corps that are a portion of it also possess quite the size. Leading that group perfectly without losing order. The amount of people that possess the commanding ability for that are limited.” (Ates)

“Karen-san and Yorishiro have plenty enough ability for that.” (Haine)

I felt like there would be no end, so I begin the dialogue.

“But by placing a person with higher ability into the proper position, don’t you think that a bigger effect will be obtained?” (Ates)

“NO.” (Haine)

I continue adding.

“Thinking about the confusion that will occur with the change, it would become quite the demerit. As long as the level is enough, it would be better to have the people already there to do it.” (Haine)

“Ara ara, you have got quite the discernment.” (Ates)

But what’s with this?

When I am speaking with this woman, I feel an inexplicable churning sensation.

“By the way, Haine-san, the people in the past said this: ‘Humans have a good heart when they are born’.” (Ates)

“Yes?” (Haine)

“On the other hand, different people from the past said this: ‘Humans are born with an evil heart’. The humans that are just born only have desires and instincts, making them the same as beasts. They said that: ‘By living together with others, they learn morals and reason and become proper human beings’.” (Ates)

“Where is it you are trying to go with this?” (Haine)

“Haine-san, which do you think it is? Is the true nature of humans good or evil? Is what we obtain as we grow up...the good or the evil?” (Ates)

When she finished talking about such weird things, Ates stood up from the bathtub.

What was hidden in the water had now been fully exposed right in front of me.

“OOOIIIII!!” (Haine)

“It can’t be helped then. If Haine-san doesn’t want to ride on my plan, I will have to create a situation where you will have no choice but to ride on it.” (Ates)

“Create a situation, you say?!” (Haine)

“A man and woman passing the night in the same room. How will it look to the eyes of the surroundings? In this occasion, it doesn’t matter what’s inside the box. By simply creating one established fact, the rest of the facts will create itself; a crafted fact that you and I became one.” (Ates)

Scary! As I thought, this woman is scary!!

No matter how I answer, this woman already had her plan succeed the moment she had infiltrated my room?!

Then why did you attack me more than that?! Or more like, that well-shaped body of hers was steadily approaching me!

“What are you doing?!” (???)

Wa?!!

In this room that I thought was my sole haven, Ates had appeared, and now, there’s a new voice resonating in the room?!

“Karen-san?!” (Haine)

By the time I noticed, Karen-san was standing at the entrance of the bath!

“Ara, what’s the matter, Karen-san? This is the room of Haine-san. Entering his room without prior notice is considered trespassing, you know?” (Ates)

“Shameless of you to say!” (Haine)

I was about to protest to a variety of things here, but a single glare of Karen-san stopped me from saying anything.

“Ates-sama...please don’t underestimate me so much. I knew that you would be perpetrating something.” (Karen)

“That’s how it is.”

And one more voice?!

That one is Yorishiro! Even Yorishiro appeared?!

“There’s always eyes on you. We received a report that you had infiltrated into Haine-san’s room secretly and we have hurriedly come here.” (Yorishiro)

I see, you have saved me! Ah but, for some reason, the offensive of Ates doesn’t stop?!

She is pressing me onto the bottom of the bathtub!

There’s a lot of things sticking onto me!!

“Ates-sama! How long are you planning on sticking onto Haine-san?! We have caught you red handed, so separate from him already!!” (Karen)

“Why do I have to do that?” (Ates)

““Arrgh!!””, she began to pull and I to push, but to no avail.

This woman is strong.

“Since it has come to this, how about you two watch from there? The moment when Haine-san and I enter a more carnal relationship. It will simply change deceit to actual truth.” (Ates)

Uwaaaaa?! So soft!

“Wait! Please get away, Ates-sama! Kugh, what should I do?!” (Karen)

“Now that it has come to this, there’s no choice, Karen-san.” (Yorishiro)

“Yorishiro-sama?! What is it that we have no choice but to do?!” (Karen)

I am a 100% sure it is nothing decent.

“If we can’t stop Ates-san, we also have to rush. In other words, we will also be attacking Haine-san here!” (Yorishiro)

“Eeeeeehh?! ”

Without room for discussion, Yorishiro immediately takes off her clothes and invaded the bathtub.

“Wait! Yorishiro-sama?! Rushing in without a single moment of hesitation! ... No, that’s not good! I am so embarrassed I can’t do something like that! ...But Ates-sama and Yorishiro-sama will be doing such things to Haine-san! Aaaaahh!!” (Karen)

Karen-san bellows as if she had awakened.

“Me as well!!!” (Karen)

Karen-san also took off what she was wearing and rushed into the bathtub!

No, wait! Didn’t I say that this bathtub was made for one person?!

If we were to add a total of four people in here, it would obviously get incredibly tight! I who was the first to enter it would of course be at the deepest area of it, and because it is a bathtub, there’s obviously water in it, you know?!

My head is sunk down into the water and...this is bad, I can’t breath!!

“GurgleGurgleGurgleGurgle!!!”

Moreover, most of my body is being pressed by soft things, and I can’t

struggle even if I wanted to.

What is with this trial?!

As I was being crushed by the accumulation of hopes and dreams, my consciousness grew dim inside the depths of the bathtub...

...

Chapter 224: Wicked Woman's Deep Affection

Dangerous.

I thought I would die.

““““I am sorry!””””

In front of me, there were a total of three beauties doing seiza in front of me.

Of course, they are wearing clothes.

I was crushed by the beauties inside the bathtub, but my survival instincts kicked in when it felt that my life was in danger. With the repulsion effect of the dark matter I created, I pushed out the three and I somehow managed to surface.

“Karen-san, Yorishiro.” (Haine)

First of all, these two.

“I am grateful that you came to save me, but the way you dealt with it was out of the question. What are you trying to pull by joining the perpetrator in crushing me to death?” (Haine)

“I have reflected on it!” (Yorishiro)

“My sense of rivalry burned!” (Karen)

They themselves must have noticed that they overdid it.

They were unexpectedly obedient.

“And Ates!!” (Haine)

“Please don't mind me.” (Ates)

This is the person that should be reflecting the most, and yet, she is not reflecting at all!!

This evil woman! This evil woman to the core!!

“Don't be so angry. Isn't it actually a happy happening for Haine-san?” (Ates)

“Huh?!” (Haine)

“Yorishiro-sama, Karen-san, and I; the strongest women in the Light Church have come at you to tie the deal, you know? Any man would wish for a situation like that.” (Ates)

“What are you saying?!” (Haine)

“Or were you not happy? Even though you embraced Yorishiro-sama and Karen-san?” (Ates)

“Hah?!” (Haine)

Deep emotional gazes were piercing me from both sides.

Karen-san and Yorishiro were staring daggers at me.

“Are you saying you are not happy? Meaning that you hate those two? Must be. No matter how beautiful you are, you wouldn’t even want to touch the hands of someone that you hate after all.” (Ates)

This woman! How underhanded!

Narrowing my choices in this way, she is trying to make me choose the answers that she wishes for.

“Well, it is true that I was happy...maybe?” (Haine)

“Then that means you like me as well.” (Ates)

“How did it come to that?!” (Haine)

Misconstruction, inflating the issue, changing the main point of the matter; this is one really fearsome woman!!

“You should have understood it now with this, Haine-san. This woman is truly fearsome.” (Yorishiro)

Is the statement of Yorishiro.

Ates had already stopped doing the seiza and had taken a sit at one of the chairs in the room.

“A political power hungry person like you, now that you have returned to the political stage, I had predicted that you would aim to increase your fighting forces, but to think you were aiming to recruit Haine-san, moreover, utilizing seduction.” (Yorishiro)

“Finding the vitals and attacking them with precision is a basic of strategy. Don’t you think a first-rate woman is fitting for the strongest man?” (Ates)

“Please don’t joke around!!” (Karen)

Maybe she reacted to those words, Karen-san stands up along with her shout.

Her legs were wobbling most likely because she was in seiza just a few moments ago.

“As expected, you are that kind of person! I understood it since the moment I saw you. You are the kind of person that likes to steal away the things that other people treasure! You are the worst. Please don’t get close to Haine-san ever again!” (Karen)

“Ufufu, what a funny girl.” (Ates)

Ates giggles as if saying she was truly amused by this

“Even if we have a connection of being the current and previous hero, we are basically strangers. I only learned about you being selected as the hero after I had been driven out of the Church. And yet, you hated me this much. I really was wondering why. Ufufu.” (Ates)

Ates continues laughing.

“So you saw through my true nature with that so called woman instinct, and thus, noticed that I was dangerous. As a woman myself, this is interesting, truly interesting. You possess some truly deep emotions as a hero, and as a woman.” (Ates)

The gaze that was directed at Karen-san had changed directions to Yorishiro.

“You have found a nice girl, Yorishiro.” (Ates)

“Your tone of voice has returned to how it was in the past, lady.” (Yorishiro)

For some reason, the two speak in a tone that they hadn’t used before.

“At any rate!” (Karen)

As if throwing that question far away, Karen-san declares this.

“Ates-sama, I won’t acknowledge you as my senior! Leaving aside the other previous heroes, you alone are not a predecessor that is worthy of respect!! I

will show you that I can surely defeat the Demon Lords even without your help!” (Karen)

“Interesting. Do as you wish. It might just happen that, by the time you notice, everything you have has all moved to be mine though.” (Ates)

Sparks fly around.

Of all places, it had to be in my room.

“I challenge you!” (Karen)

Karen-san declares.

“Once more, this time, a fair and square match between you and me. A 1 on 1 battle! The one who loses will depart from the Light Church! How about that?!” (Karen)

“Karen-san, wait a moment!” (Haine)

We finished the new and old heroes match not that long ago, and yet, you are risking injury again?!

“I don’t want to.” (Ates)

Compared to that, Ates had a mature response.

“Why would I go doing something that doesn’t have any benefits for me? Obtaining the same result as the one that was already obtained at the old and new heroes match; to repeat a battle just for that sake, even if we think about the effects on the other churches, it would be unsightly.” (Ates)

“But...!” (Karen)

“Leave it at that, Karen-san.” (Yorishiro)

Yorishiro stops Karen-san who was still trying to bite.

“This is the kind of person she is. She won’t get involved with fights that clearly define a black and white. If she were to get involved, it would be in order to paint something even bigger into a gray color. The new and old heroes match that happened before was exactly that.” (Yorishiro)

Even in my eyes, it was exactly that.

This woman won't ever challenge you head on.

Even if she were right in front of her enemy, she would hide her presence, make a plan, wait for the moment, and will set it up so that the enemy will crumble on its own.

And right now, her targets are us.

Sunnysol Ates' peculiar fighting style of not swinging a weapon to battle might have already been brandished.

Chapter 225: A pleasant talk that happens only once

“Leaving that aside.” (Yorishiro)

The tone of Yorishiro suddenly changed.

“Let’s have a more fun talk for now. The reason, we have stepped into unknown land.” (Yorishiro)

Ah, this is bad.

“We have arrived at Haine-san’s room!” (Yorishiro)

“Don’t go doing whatever you want, okay?!” (Haine)

Is what I warn, but I don’t think it will show any result. After all, the women here are: Yorishiro, Karen-san, and Ates.

“Haine-san’s room!!” (Karen)

It looks like she just noticed that reality, Karen-san’s expression implodes.

“Uhm uhm uhm, is that the place where when you arrive, all your wishes will come true?!” (Karen)

“That’s right. The world beyond the horizon that everyone wants to go to, that is Haine’s room!” (Yorishiro)

That’s not true.

Why are you classifying my room as an Utopia all on your own?

“...I didn’t take notice because I was concentrated on my hate towards Ates-san, but once I am conscious of it, I can tell that I am being touched by the smell of Haine-san from inside my lungs and it is preading through my whole body!” (Karen)

“Don’t go saying such scary things!!” (Haine)

Karen-san was slowly entering a dangerous state.

“Now that we are here, there’s only one thing to do-desu wa, Karen-san! This is a journey! Like the adventurers that found the Golden City!” (Yorishiro)

“That means it is pillaging time, right?! Like the bandits attacking the city!”
(Karen)

Stop it!

A man also has its privacy, so don't go searching here and there!

“Don't worry, Haine-san.” (Ates)

Ates tries to calm me down.

“I am the first one that invaded this room. Everything that would trouble Haine-san if seen, has all been secured by me!” (Ates)

“Is that something you say with a straight face?!” (Haine)

This group of damn trespassers!

Just as I was thinking about throwing them all out the window, a smooth voice resonated.

“Uhm...”

A girl nervously appears from the kitchen –it is Doraha.

“So you also came here...” (Haine)

Well, that's obvious. Doraha has been following Yorishiro like a shadow lately after all.

“I am truly sorry. I thought I would pour tea for everyone...” (Doraha)

This girl is also a special cookie of her own.

“Now that I think about it, I raised my voice and my throat has dried now.”
(Yorishiro)

“Sorry to have you do that. Allow me to do the tea pouring.” (Karen)

Is what Karen-san says as she approaches, but Doraha as expected had a troubled expression.

“...There's none.” (Doraha)

“None?” (Karen)

“There's no tea leaves. Instead, there's something like this...” (Doraha)

What Doraha places out was a single pot.

Since it was made of transparent glass, it was easy to see what was inside. The black beans that were completely filling up the inside.

“This...!” (Yorishiro)

“This is.....!” (Karen)

Coffee beans.

Why are Yorishiro and Karen-san making such a bitter expression?

“...Haine-san, you can drink something like coffee?” (Karen)

‘Something like’?!

Did she say ‘something like’?!

“Because you know, it is bitter. How to say it, it is like it leaves an earth-like feeling in your mouth.” (Karen)

“That bitterness is the good part of it. It clears your mind, and it is great to wake you up.” (Haine)

Well, it is also to enjoy the deep taste that comes after the bitterness though.

But even with that, Karen-san was looking at me as if I had come from another world as she said...

“But...tea is definitely the better tasting one. Coffee is just bitter.” (Karen)

“No, Karen-san.” (Yorishiro)

Yorishiro joins in.

“Tonight, let’s try delighting on coffee.” (Yorishiro)

“Yorishiro-sama?!” (Karen)

No, just leave already.

“Think about it thoroughly Karen-san. Not sharing the same likes in food as the person you love has a risk of them looking at you with bad eyes. Difference in values. It might become a reason for divorce!” (Yorishiro)

Worrying about those things before marrying.

“R-Right! There’s nothing bad in challenging it right now while I can! ...Hainesan!!” (Karen)

“Yes?!” (Haine)

“One cup-full of coffee please! And make it a real deep one!” (Karen)

Even if you order it in such a specially energetic manner...hah, can't be helped.

I decided on making coffee at once.

The coffee beans are already roasted, so I crush them with the mill and turn them into powder. After that, I just have to drip it, but in that part, I take out the espresso machine.

“““““?!”””””

For some reason, the gaze of the girls gather all at once.

“What is that?! That kettle-like thing!” (Karen)

“I don’t know! Is that a tool of an ancient civilization?! Haine-san, don’t tell me you are bringing out forbidden knowledge?!” (Yorishiro)

What are these people talking about.

This espresso machine is an actual present from Hydra Ville.

With this, I can use the deep coffee beans of Ishtar Blaze that I was given a lot of by Sasae-chan's Oba-san, extract them quickly, and make a deep espresso.

“Umu, today was made nicely as well.” (Haine)

It looks like there's some nice stickiness to it.

From the spout of the espresso machine, a dark liquid is poured into the cup.

“Uhm, Haine-san, isn’t this cup pretty small?” (Yorishiro)

“That’s because it is an espresso.” (Haine)

As if saying 'here you go, drink', I slide the cups to the two.

“Karen-san, go ahead!” (Yorishiro)

“No no! Yorishiro-sama, you first!” (Karen)

Since coming here, it has been an outbreak of calamities.

I don't care, so just drink it or it will get cold.

"Fufu, you two are such children."

The one coming out at this moment was the wicked woman who had stayed in silence until now.

""Ates-san!""

"Coffee can't be enjoyed by the tongue of children; it is the drink of the chosen ones." (Ates)

No, it isn't that big of a deal.

"I will accept the coffee that Haine-san has put his heart and soul in pouring. The two of you should get start getting used to it by first training with the sourness of the strawberries on cakes." (Ates)

"Gunununu!" (Yorishiro)

"Again saying whatever you want!" (Karen)

The reason they can't fight back at the offensive of the enemy must be because of the bitterness of the coffee.

With the bitter gazes at the sides, Ates takes the cup into her hand and, hesitantly, places her lips on it.

"...Bitter." (Ates)

Oi.

"Ah! You now just said it was bitter! It is bitter huh! It is bitter for Ates-sama too huh!" (Karen)

"As I thought, you can't handle it either. You false-bravado woman! If you keep being such a vain person, you will get your legs caught up someday! And in reality, you have failed once already, so learn some restrain!!" (Yorishiro)

As if the cover had been torn up, the women begin to go all 'gya gya'. As they say: one is company, two is group, three is a crowd.

I had no way of stopping that noisy fight, so I just watch over it.

“...Haine-sama, I tried doing it as you taught me.” (Doraha)

“Nice, good job.” (Haine)

I drink the coffee that Doraha had newly made.

Bitter.

But that’s what makes it tasty.

Why do these girls not understand the greatness of this?

Chapter 226: A pleasant talk that happens only once

– Second part

“By the way, can you please leave already?” (Haine)

I say this towards these three holy women that still remain in my room.

“Isn’t it fine? How about we just stay in Haine-san’s room for today?”
(Yorishiro)

“...My room only has one bed though.” (Haine)

“Is there a problem in that?” (Yorishiro)

There’s only problems here.

This Light Founder, does she want to tie the deal with me so much?

“Haine-san, right now this room is like the inside of a box. As long as you don’t open it, no one will know what’s inside.” (Yorishiro)

“?”

“In other words, as long as the doors and windows are not opened and it is not possible to peek inside, the fact that we did perverted things with Haine-san will be mixed with a reality where we haven’t done perverted things. And so, even if we were to actually do perverted things, there’s no problem at all!”
(Yorishiro)

That doesn’t even work as sophistry.

Regardless of what the people outside the box thing, I would be settling my own reality.

“Then, Haine-san is trying to say this, right?” (Ates)

Ates joins the fray.

I don’t want this woman to say one more word, and yet, for some reason, she joins Yorishiro in attacking me like crazy.

“What you are saying is that you will be ravishing Yorishiro-sama, Karen-san,

and I, so the argument of the box is not necessary!” (Ates)

“Heck no!” (Haine)

A straight ball!

After the sophistry of Yorishiro, there comes the straight ball of Ates.

Aren’t you two actually pretty in sync?!

Or more like, just go! I want to enjoy the solace of my room at the very least!

“That’s right! Yorishiro-sama and Ates-sama, staying in Haine-san’s room like this would be improper!” (Karen)

Karen-san reproaches the two wicked women that have a messed up conception of chastity.

As expected, she is the actual holy woman!

“Cause...! I haven’t brought my pajama over! If I knew, I would have brought the cutest one I have! The super cute one I bought at Hydra Ville that has laces!” (Karen)

The gist of it was slightly deviated!

“Ara ara, what a cute hero. Even though a pajama would soon be stripped off.” (Ates)

Ates once again comes out with her blunt words, but in response, Karen-san...

“...?” (Karen)

“Eh?” (Ates)

Karen-san was confused, unable to understand the words of Ates, and that led to Ates being the one bewildered.

“L-Looks like you are a tougher opponent than I thought, Karen-san! Is this the power of an airhead?” (Ates)

“More importantly! Sleeping with my casual clothes would be improper and I won’t condone that! It would make wrinkles in my skirt!” (Karen)

“As I am saying, you should just go naked—Gnnhhh!” (Ates)

It was reaching a territory that couldn’t be ignored, so Yorishiro poked Ates’

side.

“...*Cough*. Then, how about we do this? Bring the pajama over.” (Yorishiro)

“Bring it over? Who will?” (Karen)

“Well, just watch. Doraha, send a command to that person.” (Yorishiro)

The silent as a shadow Doraha gave a short response of ‘yes’, and takes out the mass produced ethereal communication device and made a call somewhere.

“...Parent bird to chick; ‘the falcon has descended’. I repeat ‘the falcon has flown’.” (Doraha)

Which one is it. There’s no repeating there.

After finishing what seemed to be a coded transmission of sorts, the sound of knocking could be heard from the door of my room.

“Who is it?” (Haine)

When I open to see who it is, there was a single maid standing at the front of the door.

“Why a maid?!” (Haine)

But wait...this girl wearing maid clothes...I feel like I have seen her before? Moreover, recently.

“...Ah, Mina!” (Haine)

“Yes, it is Platina Mina. Thanks for last time.” (Mina)

Isn’t this the woman that was acting as the referee in the previous new and old heroes match.

It is the girl that brought out a bomb the moment the victory of the current heroes was set and made things a mess.

After that, it was confirmed that this was the deed of the contra-reconciliation side, so it became one of the ingredients in increasing their blame.

“Why are you in maid clothes?” (Haine)

“Fufufu, Haine-san, to think that you would order a prostitute to cosplay as a maid; you have quite the nice hobbies—Guhoo!!” (Ates)

Ates said something lacking manners, so I poked her side.

And so, about the matter of Mina being a maid...

“Uhm...I was originally working as a grunt in the Light Church. How to say it, being a maid is more of my main job...” (Mina) Ah, so that’s what it was.

“Just as Yorishiro-sama ordered, I have brought one sleepwear and a stay-over set.” (Mina)

“Good work. We might still have need for you, so be on standby.” (Yorishiro)

“Uhm...! I am already outside my work-time period though!” (Mina)

So she was the one that was called just now huh.

If I remember correctly, after the bomb incident she made herself, I had some business so I left her with Yorishiro, but I don’t know what happened after.

“Even if Mina-san caused the explosion, she was simply a throw-away pawn used by the contra-reconciliation side. Due to Yorishiro-sama’s bountiful consideration, she was pardoned.” (Doraha)

The shadow Doraha explains it to me.

She is already beginning to become the lubricant in this group.

“Her original job was that of a pawn—I mean, maid. So she was assigned as the direct maid of Yorishiro-sama. The reason why she appeared tonight is due to those kind of circumstances.” (Doraha)

Direct control of the Founder, she says.

That’s a big promotion for a maid.

“Is it okay? Even if she was used, to give such treatment to a person that actually stood against the current order? Won’t it give a bad example?” (Haine)

“She is in the direct command of Yorishiro-sama, you know?” (Doraha)

“...”

“Do you really think she will get treated well?” (Doraha)

Right. My thought pattern was incorrect.

“I feel like you people are saying something incredibly rude about me, but this is something that I thought deeply about, you know?” (Yorishiro)

While saying this, Yorishiro hugs Mina who was standing at her side.

“Hywawawa!” (Mina)

“Ates-san is holding the depths of this girl after all. There’s the need for me to keep supervision on her at my side.” (Yorishiro)

Now that she mentions it! After the incident with the explosion, when we tried to have Mina spit out the details about the person behind it, Ates had suddenly appeared and, with a single glare, she was silenced.

This without doubt means that Ates has grasped something important of Ates!

Maybe she has her parents held hostage? Or it might be that Ates holds an important secret of her.

“...Fufufu.” (Ates)

“...”

And Ates who was here made another suggestive gaze. As if a predator was glaring at its prey. And that prey that is Mina was sweating bullets.

“A-A-Ates-sama!” (Mina)

“What, little kitten?” (Ates)

“Ah, as I thought, I can’t!! I am sorry, Yorishiro-sama! I can’t live without Ates-sama!!!” (Mina)

Is what she said as the maid Mina rubs her face onto the legs of Ates while crying.

What is this?

“Mina-san had been under the command of Ates-sama for a brief period of time.” (Doraha)

Even if you tell me that...

I got an explanation from Doraha, and yet, I can't understand the situation at all.

"Well, Ates-sama brought their relationship to that in order to utilize Mina-san, but now, Mina-san is the slave of Ates-sama. If she doesn't receive the love of Ates-sama, she will fall into withdrawal symptoms." (Doraha)

Uwa!

Because of that, she closed her mouth completely for the sake of Ates?!

Uwa...Ueeeh...

"That's why I will do my best for her sake!" (Yorishiro)

Yorishiro once again hugs Mina tightly.

"Mina-san has been enslaved by Ates-san, in that case, by having me enslave her, I will have her break free of her withdrawal symptoms. The reason why I had her be my personal maid is also because of that." (Yorishiro)

"Use poison to deal with poison?!" (Haine)

I couldn't find any more befitting words to describe this situation.

"I won't let you do that, Yorishiro-sama. She is my little kitten after all. I won't let you unpoison her." (Ates)

"Then try stealing her away from me. Let's see which enslaving power is the strongest; yours or mine. This is a match to determine which one has the strongest poison." (Yorishiro)

The people themselves called it poison.

Ates was hugging her from the front, and Yorishiro was hugging her from behind, ending with Mina-san in the middle of that sandwich.

"Gyaaaaa!! Yorishiro-sama! Ates-sama! This is bad, this is dangerous! This is heaven!! Yorishiro-sama's softness and Ates-sama's softness are attacking me from both sides!! My blood is being nourished by both nutrients!!" (Mina)

...When humans get way too happy, they begin to scream huh.

I do have my share of experiences as well though.

“What Mina-san did can be considered unforgivable, but if we think of that as a punishment, well, I would say it is fitting.” (Doraha)

...Right, I also concur with Doraha’s opinion.

“Uhm...”

Let’s not watch those three wild cats in their silly ruckus anymore.

Thanks to these, Karen-san, who had been silent all this time, had finally spoken.

“Uhm, I don’t understand well, but...what in the world is going on?” (Karen)

“It is fine for you to not understand.” (Haine)

There’s no need to understand the taste of this woman called Mina at all.

If that concept were to be digested in Karen-san’s head, the Hero Alliance would fall. There’s one member in the group that would wish for this kind of development after all.

“Hah...”

On the other hand, Mina had escaped from the strange situation of being sandwiched by the Light Founder and the previous hero while having faint breath.

“Hah...Hah...! Why am I being put through this?!” (Mina)

That’s what I want to ask.

“Well, your throat must be dry after all that mess. Drink this coffee.” (Haine)

“Ah, thank you very much!” (Mina)

Mina drank the espresso I gave her in one gulp.

“Ooh, you got a nice way of drinking there.” (Haine)

“There’s nothing nice about it though. Espresso is supposed to be drunk that way, right? It went smoothly down my throat, it was pretty well made. I like more the style of putting sugar before drinking though! Hm?” (Mina)

Right after, Mina noticed the gazes that were being poured at her by the girls who can’t drink coffee.

“Ah, what’s the matter? Yorishiro-sama? Ates-sama? Even Karen-sama?! Please stop it. Did I do something wrong?! I didn’t do anything! Ah, stop it! Don’t sandwich me again! If you do that again, this time for sure I will—! Aaaaahh!!” (Mina)

Or more like, can’t you leave already, Mina? And while at it, everyone else...

Chapter 227: Incident

After that, a few days passed.

In that time, the Light Church's headquarters were -at a glance-passing peaceful days.

Karen-san was endeavoring in her training against the Demon Lords as always, and Yorishiro was purging several number of corrupted components every day.

...Ates' scheme of taking root into the Knight corps was also steadily proceeding.

It looked like nothing was happening, but things were certainly occurring.

The countdown continues —the countdown to the breakdown of everything.

The first small crack, that could be said to be an omen of this, happened today.

At that day, I was having a heated discussion with the knights about: 'what is more precious for leg fetishists, the thighs or the back of the foot?'.
In that time, General Grades was participating in it as well, but bad news had come.

In that time, General Grades was participating in it as well, but bad news had come.

"Knight General! This is terrible! An incident has occurred!"

The young knight jumped into the station and said this with lost breath.

"What's the matter?! Monsters?!" (Grades)

For the knights of the church, an incident normally means monsters.

The Aurora Knights had already been reborn as an actual group that can deal with the monsters under the lead of the new General Grades.

Everyone was trembling in anticipation at the prospects of showing this off, but...

"No, that's not it!"

The newcomer knight said this with an impatient expression.

“The ones creating an incident are...humans!”

“To think that our first deployment since becoming the Knight General would be against humans. It doesn’t feel right.” (Grades)

The first thing that happened the moment we arrived at the place of the incident were the complains of General Grades.

In reality, the appearance rate of monsters lately has been abnormally low, and it was silent to the point that it felt as if they were waiting for the right moment.

The moment is most likely...the moment we will be encountering the four Demon Lords.

It is as if all monsters were commanded by them, and that in itself was ominous.

“Now now, let’s concentrate on the incident at hand.” (Haine)

It is not only monsters that the knight corps have to deal with; the public order of the Light capital is also an important duty of them.

Depending on the situation, I will also be lending my assistance.

My position in the church has gotten even harder to understand, and it is more like, anything goes for me.

The outline of the situation was the people had barricaded themselves in the metropolitan area.

An armed group suddenly appeared at a certain establishment of Apollon City and trespassed. They took the customers and employees there as hostages, and have barricaded themselves in there.

We knight corps are currently encircling the outside of that establishment. We have closed the escape routes.

“Hey, Haine. What do you think is going on?” (Grades)

“Doesn’t look like it has to do with robbers. If that were the case, they would

have robbed money and everything worth it and wouldn't have taken their sweet time to be encircled by us." (Haine)

"That's right. If they were aiming for money, there's no one who would have chosen this place to do the robbery." (Grades)

The place we are currently encircling is the Light Grand Library.

It is not only the biggest library in Apollon City, but also said to be the biggest library in the world.

I have used it a number of times myself, so it is a place I am pretty attached to.

What's there are books about Gods, and I don't think there's anything robbers would want to go there to rob.

But if we see it from a different perspective, it wouldn't be an exaggeration to call it a treasury. The knowledge that humanity has piled up has been stored in this building written in letters. And as you would expect from the biggest library in the world, there's a lot of old books there. There's a good amount of books that only exist in this library.

This point was making this incident even more troublesome.

What's the objective of the perpetrators that have shut themselves in at such a delicate of a place?

"Of course, we will have to take into consideration the employees and customers that are being held hostages. This looks like more trouble than dealing with your run-of-the-mill monsters." (Grades)

It is just as he says.

For now, what is it we should be doing?

We will warn the barricaded perpetrators with the ethereal speaker, ask about their objective, and hear out their demands.

Just as we thought about this, the other side made a move first.

A single armed person came out from the front entrance of the Light Grand Library.

“Ah!”

“That’s...!”

It wasn’t only me, but many other light knights raised their voice in bewilderment.

Because one of the possible perpetrators was actually a familiar person. It was the previous superior of the light knights after all.

“Dobbe!”

The previous Light Knight General. Abusing his position and authority, that avarice of his had finally bit him back and was fired from his job as Knight General not long ago.

Why is that person here?!

Without caring about our confusion, Dobbe takes out an ethereal speaker as well and speaks out loud with conviction.

“To the mere shadow that was once the Aurora Knight corps and has now rotten to its core! We are the true Aurora Knight corps! The legitimate sword that provides true justice in the Light Church! Its name is Ultimate Justice Aurora Knight corps!!” (Dobbe)

“Uwa...”

With this, I could now tell at an instant the reason of this incident.

It was so easy to understand now.

“What we demand is the justice and rights that all humans have in this world! Disassemble the high-ups of the current Church that are the source of evil and entrust the church’s administration to us! If you don’t, we will kill all the hostages and burn down this Light Grand Library!!” (Dobbe)

Chapter 228: The enemy of humans are humans

“Knight General, what shall we do?”

The one being called at was the actual Knight General.

Our General Grades.

“Even if you ask me, it doesn’t look like they will be listening to us.” (Grades)

General Grades also looked pretty bummed by this.

This is a group that was newly made for emergencies, and now, its leader was holding his head in pain.

“This is already legit terrorism.” (Haine)

And so, the outline of this matter should be like this.

The decaying faction of the Light Church that had been expelled have congregated due to their dissatisfaction, and have now gone berserk in order to obtain their past glory.

Because of the law, no matter how much they struggle, they have no means of winning. Even if they were to use force straight on to steal it back, they have no chance of winning.

And so, what they have decided on doing was to take citizens hostage to take it in their hands.

They are using the lives of unrelated people to have their wishes granted.

“These people are the worst!” (Haine)

I couldn’t hide the disgust that was welling up inside of me.

Fights are heartless in nature, however, there’s still a line that shouldn’t be crossed.

Even if you can’t win upfront, to attack the weak people that they should be protecting is already the deed of scum. This already can’t even be considered a war.

No matter how big of a justice you stand by, the fact that you have done

something like this defeats all purpose.

For scum that doesn't even understand the rules of fighting, it is impossible to act like humans anymore.

"...But it is true that they have got us where it hurts." (Grades)

General Grades crosses his arms and groans.

"According to the people that luckily managed to escape, there's at least more than 100 people inside the Light Grand Church. If we were to include the librarians and employees, the numbers would be even more." (Grades)

"They have captured that amount of people, so the perpetrators must be quite a lot as well." (Haine)

"Looking at the number of ethereal cars of the attackers, there should be at least 60 terrorists inside the building." (Grades)

"Of course, we have punctured the cars to make them unusable!", a young light knight said.

As expected of General Grades and the new Aurora Knight corps.

Even against human terrorists they are not used to dealing with, their work of grasping the situation is fast.

"But it doesn't change the fact that this is an incredibly bad situation." (Grades)

This is the first time I see such a severe expression in Grades.

"In incidents where the perpetrators have barricaded themselves with hostages, it is close to impossible to capture the perpetrators without any sort of damage to the hostages. In this occasion, everything is the worst." (Grades)

"First of all, the number of hostages is way too many; the perpetrators are also many. If the expected number is at least 60, controlling the situation in an instant would be impossible. If it turns into a melee battle, there's no doubt that the hostages will also face danger."

"The place is also the worst, you know. The Light Grand Church has important documents inside it; in other words, a treasury of knowledge. There's even

important documents that only remain there.”

“If the perpetrators were to get desperate and light them on fire, things will get irreversible in a lot of meanings.”

The light knights were bringing out their opinions one after the other, but each one of them were not favorable.

“What are the perpetrators saying?” (Grades)

The question of Grades was answered by a young light knight.

“As always, former General Dobbe is babbling as much as he wants in public. He wants all the current Founders and heroes to quit, and to return him to his position as Knight General.”

“His abilities as a negotiator are abysmal...” (Grades)

I give a proposition to General Grades that was biting his lips.

“How about I deal with Dobbe?” (Haine)

“Don’t don’t. You are one of the center figures in this big reformation, you know? For Dobbe, you are a direct hate target.” (Grades)

If I were to face Dobbe who is a bag full of pride, it would stimulate him in the wrong way huh.

Those people, if I were to encounter them normally, I could have beaten them up in a matter of seconds!

“Also there’s a lot of things we still don’t understand.” (Grades)

Grades says this while stroking his chin.

“The terrorists this time around are at least 60, but what does that mean?” (Grades)

“You will have to elaborate more.” (Haine)

What does he even mean by ‘what does that mean?’.

“Due to the current big reformation, many people who were involved with the corruption had been chased off their job. The Light Church as a whole would have a total of a hundred to two hundreds who were a target of this, but

in terms of the Aurora Knight corps, counting that Dobbe there, it would only reach to around ten.” (Grades)

And yet, there are supposed to be 60 terrorists inside the library.

“Of course, if we were to count the people that had light sins and were dealt with by only demoting, it would be a good number, but I don’t think those people would risk the job they barely managed to maintain to join Dobbe’s side.” (Grades)

My very thoughts.

“Even if they were to be fired from the knight corps, the Zeberphon household was still a famous household of the Light Church. Didn’t they gather troops with their assets?” (Haine)

“There’s that possibility, but if they were to do something like that, it would have reached our ears beforehand in some way or another. Don’t you think strange the very fact that those careless people were able to carry out this plan without raising the attention of the knight corps?” (Grades)

We weren’t even able to see a single smoke before they went into action after all.

That they are skilled enough to manage that...is an impossibility.

“Also, now that they have been chased off the Aurora Knights, their divine tools that serve as their method of attack have already been confiscated. Since they have entered into violent actions, it must mean that they have no choice but to rely on simple swords and bows.” (Grades)

Even so...we were still looking at Dobbe who continues shouting at the entrance of the library. In his equipment, it was clear that he had something that was far stronger than a sword or a bow.

“...That’s...without doubt an ethereal weapon, isn’t it?” (Haine)

“Well, you should be the one who is most versed in that, Haine. It is a known truth that the creation of ethereal weapons is prohibited. But in the Wind Church that is said to be the most advanced in research, there’s rumors saying that they possess that kind of technology.” (Grades)

It reminds me of the bombing incident at the heroes match.

“Could this possibly be the evil produced by the reconciliation of the churches? It would mean that those kind of things will be circulated more and more in the underground society.” (Haine)

“Rather than the danger of the future, it looks like the present is already in a dangerous state!” (Grades)

Thinking about the present, the danger of the situation is clearer and clearer.

In the end, there's a limit to how much a sword and a bow will be able to kill at once. But what if they utilize something similar to the bomb used at the hero match from before?

...The situation would be even harder to deal with.

“Currently, that idiotic Dobbe is just ranting on his own and hasn't brought out clear demands. For now, we shouldn't provoke him unnecessarily and have him speak as much as he wants.” (Grades)

“It will be a matter of buying time after all.” (Haine)

But maintaining the current status quo won't resolve the matter.

This might be one of the most difficult situations we have had to face until now.

The opponent only has the brain of a monkey, and yet, those idiots have obtained the worst kind of weapons and are holding hostages.

We have to avoid hurting the people there and, at the same time, not hurt the documents that would be considered the treasure of humanity.

These are way too delicate of conditions, but even so, we have to take action!

Chapter 229: Clash of objectives

Dobbe, who is no longer a General and is now a simple human, continues doing what he specializes in doing; nonstop talking.

“...And so, the current Founder -Yorishiro-is an evil, underhanded, and lying witch! Just like the shitty hero Karen! Those two are going to bring the Light Church into the path of destruction, and the world will be dyed in evil! That’s why we have stood up! We -the Ultimate Justice Aurora Knight corps-are the true knights of justice of the Light Church! True light knights at heart! If you are of right heart, stand up and defeat evil! If you do that, the sin of abandoning me and dropping me into hell, I will consider making it lighter! Wahahahaha!!”
(Dobbe)

His speech was not even worth hearing. But it did serve to extend the current status quo.

However, we can’t go prolonging this too much.

The hostages also have their own stamina and stress limits, and now that they are in a situation where their very life is in danger, their limits will be reaching faster than normal.

We have to tackle this matter as fast as possible, or it will end in a situation that can’t be reversed.

Even so, we couldn’t find a method to breakthrough this situation.

“Damn it!”

For example; if the wind hero Hyue were here, she would be able to grasp the situation inside with precision using her ultrasound, and would be able to use her accurate sniping to silence them; or if the earth hero Sasae-chan were here, we could burrow underground and break through the place to make a surprise attack at places they wouldn’t expect; however, these girls are currently training to face the Demon Lords in their respective nations.

Even if we were to ask for their help, it would take too much time for them to get here. Moreover, this is a situation that has nothing to do with monsters; this

is an internal matter of the Light Church.

We have to resolve this matter on our own.

This alliance and reconciliation wasn't done in order to ask for help in this kind of matters.

But...with the methods we currently have, the pieces simply don't fill.

The dark matter I use would not only wipe out Dobbe and the other lowlifes, but also the hostages and the important documents in the library.

Dark matter possesses the highest destructive power in the world and is the ultimate method of destruction, but it lacks the precision. To think that its high destructive power would prove to be its biggest fault at this moment.

"General Grades! Assistant Haine!!"

A young knight runs into the meeting room.

"Reinforcements! Reinforcements have arrived!"

"Reinforcements, you say... This place is currently in a stalemate, and even if we were to increase our numbers, this isn't a situation that would make a difference—-?!" (Grades)

Contrary to our confusion, the person that entered into the tent was an unexpected person.

"Ates!" (Haine)

"Yes. I am the commander of the reinforcements." (Ates)

Are you saying that the previous hero has come all the way here?

"The Founder Yorishiro-sama is really hurt by this incident. She said that her own impatient reformation has created displeasure in the surroundings and had created this kind of violence. In order to not lengthen the worry of Yorishiro-sama, there's the need to suppress the perpetrators as fast as possible." (Ates)

"We understand that...but..." (Grades)

General Grades wanted to explain the current situation, but before that happened, Ates proclaimed.

“I will be taking command and break into the library. Please select the elimination squad.” (Ates)

““Wa?!””

Grades and I lost our words at the suddenness of this.

And soon after, we were heavily confused.

“W-Wait please! Inside the building there’s more than 200 hostages! Moreover, the place they are barricading themselves in is the Light Grand Library! It is filled with important documents! If they were to catch on fire in the middle of battle...!” (Grades)

“Even so, there’s no other good option, right? In that case, no matter how much time we take, it would be the same —no, the more time we take, the more chances they will notice our hesitation, and it will make the terrorists more confident.” (Ates)

“?!”

“In that case, we have to take a firm attitude and break in to wipe out the perpetrators at once. We have to thoroughly teach those insects how fearsome we are and that such methods won’t work against us. A number of casualties can later be handled as sacrificing a few for the greater good.” (Ates)

“Don’t joke around!” (Haine)

I glare at Ates straight on.

“Like hell I would accept humans being killed for such a reason! We will save all the hostages. We won’t hurt the treasures of the past either. Those are the conditions!” (Haine)

“It is nice to be idealistic, but ideals that can’t be made into reality are simply delusions. Are you saying you have a great plan that can make that ideal a reality?” (Ates)

“That’s...” (Haine)

I couldn’t say anything.

If I had such a convenient method, we would have already done it a long time

ago.

“There is.”

“?! ”

More people enter the tent; they were no other than Yorishiro and Karen-san.

The heads of the Light Church were currently gathered here!

“Yorishiro-sama! Karen-san!” (Ates)

“Ates-san, I don’t remember giving you permission to mobilize. If you belittle my intentions, I will have you leave the Light Church.” (Yorishiro)

“Guh.”

“Also, I will have you stop your talks as if you were talking in my stead and recreating it as you imagine. I will be speaking my words with my own mouth.” (Yorishiro)

“...I am truly sorry.” (Ates)

That Ates came here arbitrarily, and yet, she planned on wrapping it all up on her own?

“Haine-san!” (Karen)

Karen-san runs towards me.

“I am glad I made it in time. Actually... a completely different report arrived to Yorishiro-sama. It was supposed to be a really small incident, and there was apparently no need to report to Yorishiro-sama. Just in case, I checked the details of the report myself, and we were both surprised!” (Karen)

I see.

It must have been Ates who bribed the secretary or had a grasp of her weakness.

Proof incriminating her will definitely not come out to light, but on the strange things that occur, there’s always the shadow of this person —is how things have been working lately.

Then, why did Ates go this far? Why did she go so far as to get a dashing start

on Yorishiro to get this deeply involved in this incident?

This barricade incident is starting to smell even more suspicious than before.

Chapter 230: The shadow moves

And so, about the plan of Yorishiro...

“This girl will do her best.” (Yorishiro)

The one who was pushed by her back and appeared was a small girl.

Her skin is darkish in color, and gives the impression as if she had appeared from inside a shadow.

“Doraha?” (Haine)

“With her ability, she can infiltrate the library without alerting the perpetrators.” (Yorishiro)

Doraha is the resident of an ancient civilization, and because of many circumstances, she has leapt time and is currently at our side. Our era is practically a different world for Doraha, and that ability of hers can be said to be special in this world.

The power of ‘Shadow’ that isn’t any of the other known elements; different from all the five heroes of this world, in other words, a sixth hero —the shadow hero, Doraha.

And that Doraha speaks on the stead of her master that is Yorishiro.

“One of my abilities, ‘Shadow’ lets me burrow into the shadows and, via that shadow, I can move around. I won’t be noticed by the humans around when I do that.” (Doraha)

““!!””

Grades and I looked at each other and send orders to the young light knights.

“Investigate the surroundings of the library. Investigate at what direction the shadow of the building is pointing at!” (Grades)

Lately, there have been convenient things called ethereal wireless transmission devices, so the orders and reports happen in an instant.

{Currently at 5 o’clock, the shadows are all pointing west. Weather is good.

The surroundings are bright, so the shadows are distinct too.}, the report soon came.

Yorishiro adds to the explanation.

“Doraha’s ability is ‘Shadow’. It isn’t ‘Darkness’. That’s why shine as much light as possible, and the more clear the distinction between light and shadow is, the more advantageous it is for her.” (Yorishiro)

In the first place, ‘Shadow’ is a variety of the Light element.

Where there’s light, there’s shadow.

By absorbing light, it changes into ‘shadow’ that is a quasi-version of darkness.

That is the shadow technique that was created in the ancient Underground Country. That’s why the biggest weakness of ‘shadow’ is darkness, and a half-baked black has no choice but to be dyed by the thicker black that is darkness.

But it is exactly because it is half-baked that there’s also many things it can do.

“After succeeding in infiltrating the library, I have to move to a room that is as bright as possible and has windows. In a dim room where the light and shadows are not distinct, a proper shadow won’t be made, and I won’t be able to hide my body.” (Doraha)

Hearing this explanation, the other light knights also pitched in.

“Then, the inside of the library would be dangerous. In the first place, books are normally not exposed directly to sunlight.”

“But ethereal lights have been installed inside the library recently, so in terms of lighting, there should be no problem. The perpetrators should also be scared of a surprise attack by us or an uprising from the hostages, so there’s no way they would stay in a place that has bad vision.”

They are freely bringing out their opinions.

It is still a dangerous situation, but the atmosphere that this young light knights give out makes me feel the fruits of the reformation, and that makes me happy.

“Yorishiro-sama! Haine-san!” (Karen)

Karen-san, who had left temporarily, had returned inside the tent.

“I used the flying machine to check out the library from above.” (Karen)

And...

“I managed to confirm the captured hostages through the window.” (Karen)

“Seriously?!”

Karen-san slides her finger through the map of the library that was spread at the table that’s at the center of the tent.

“At the large hall that’s called ‘the Goddess Space’, there’s an area there where outsiders would read the books in. It is plenty spacious. It looks like the hostages have been gathered there.” (Karen)

It is true that this is an adequate room to have a big amount of people to keep in check.

“Originally, the Light Grand Library is a big construction of three floors, but due to trying to appeal its artistic design and because of trying to secure a light source to read, the middle of the first floor, the ‘Goddess’ Space’, has a big skylight made there. I could clearly see the figure of the hostages from there.” (Karen)

Is what Karen-san says as she gives a thumbs up.

This result is thanks to being able to see from a vantage point that wouldn’t have been possible without the flying machine.

“Karen-sama, that means the hostages aren’t divided in different spaces, right?” (Grades)

General Grades asks with deep caution.

“That’s right. The hundred people that I managed to confirm beforehand were all there when I checked through the skylight, and just in case, I checked the other rooms, but I didn’t find any traces of people being locked up there.” (Karen)

‘It is only limited to the rooms that I can peek through the windows, though’,

is what Karen-san added.

“Okay. Looks like the other side are amateurs! In this occasions, it is an established tactic to separate the hostages in order to keep an insurance, and yet, it looks like they didn’t even do that!” (Grades)

Just that single point of everyone being gathered at one place had made the situation a lot better.

But there’s still the delicate part about not damaging the important documents in the library though...

“Lives are top priority. Doraha will burrow into the shadows and infiltrate the place. After securing the safety of the hostages, the light knights will rush in from all the entrances of the library and suppress them. As speedy as possible. Whether the perpetrators are left dead or alive is not important.” (Yorishiro)

Yorishiro gives out cold-hearted instructions.

Now that the path to resolving this issue is visible, it all depends now on whether the perpetrators will come with an unexpected move.

After the meeting was over, what’s left is to act.

From the most important to the lowest, everyone knew their own role and mobilized in order to achieve it.

“Wait.” (Haine)

And in all that, I called out to Doraha who is the kernel of this plan.

“What is it, Haine-sama?” (Doraha)

“I want to ask something. Your power of burrowing into the shadows, is that limited to only you?” (Haine)

That question actually made the people around react heavily.

“Haine-san, don’t tell me you are...!” (Karen)

It is exactly that.

“I will also be going along. And I will be crushing those terrorist bastards myself.” (Haine)

Chapter 231: Unbelievable passage

And so, the result was that, it is possible for Doraha to hide other people aside from herself inside the shadow.

In reality, if that weren't the case, the clothes of Doraha wouldn't be able to enter and Doraha would have to enter the shadow butt-naked after all.

"Please think of being inside a shadow as being practically inside water."
(Doraha)

"Meaning?" (Haine)

"First of all, you can't breathe at all. So, the time that one can stay inside a shadow is incredibly limited." (Doraha)

"Meaning that it is only as long as you can hold your breath huh. In that case, it is fine. I am the type that can hold his breath for quite a while." (Haine)

To put it more precisely, I can utilize my dark matter to slow down the passage of time to make it so that I can pass a long time without the need of breathing, but explaining that would be a pain, so I just keep it as 'I can hold my breath for long'.

"Please wait!" (Karen)

Karen-san hurriedly interposes.

"If it is fine to accompany Doraha, then how about increasing the amount of people that infiltrate? The more people send to battle will increase the chances of success!" (Karen)

"I am sorry to say, Karen-sama..." (Doraha)

Doraha composedly says.

"The amount of people that can burrow inside a shadow is proportional to the size of the shadow itself. Considering the nature of this time's plan, we have to think that the most we can bring is one more person." (Doraha)

"In that case, the better the reason Haine-san should be the one going."
(Yorishiro)

Yorishiro joins in.

“Haine-san is without doubt the strongest fighting force in this present time. On top of that, it is known that the perpetrators are using weapons that utilize ethereal in some way. The one who can adapt to an unexpected situation the best is Haine-san and his dark matter.” (Yorishiro)

“But...” (Karen)

Even with that, she looked like she was worried as she showed an expression of disapproval.

“Know your place, hero. You have the important duty of sending these two to where the hostages are.” (Yorishiro)

“Yes...” (Karen)

The strictness of Yorishiro forcefully made Karen-san accept it.

“Ates-san.” (Yorishiro)

“Yes?” (Ates)

Ates had gone completely silent since the moment Yorishiro entered the place, but she has been in this meeting room this whole time. Or more like, she was not allowed to leave.

If we were to let her go to a place where we can't see her, who knows what she would do.

“Stay in the meeting room. I won't allow you to leave my side until this plan is completed.” (Yorishiro)

“If that's the will of our Founder, I will of course obey.” (Ates)

Ates was obedient, but who knows how much of that obedience is how she actually feels.

At any rate, I don't think we will be able to only look forward as we fight.

The particulars of Doraha reaching the hostages has already been planned.

The flying machine of Karen-san comes to play again.

This thing really does play a role everytime.

“Uhm, in other words...” (Haine)

“Doraha-san and Haine-san will be entering the shadow of the flying machine.” (Karen)

I see.

Even the birds flying in the sky will make shadows. If we were to enter the shadow of an object in flight, the mobility will increase by a lot.

The place where the hostages are held in supposedly has a skylight, so if the flying machine comes from the top and projects its shadow from the skylight, that will be enough to make the infiltration a success.

“Karen-sama, make sure to have the sun always at your back when flying, and please make sure not to make contact with the shadow of the building. If you mix with other shadows, there’s the chance that we will be left in that other one.” (Doraha)

“Understood.” (Karen)

Looks like the shadow ability has its own rules.

In order to not be noticed by the perpetrators, Karen-san has to fly from a hidden location.

When the flight gets stabilized, Doraha and I are supposed to burrow inside the shadow, but before we even began, something drew our attention.

“General Grades?” (Haine)

We saw Grades-san heading somewhere.

Where is he heading to?

He should be in the meeting room viewing the situation.

“This was supposed to be a secret since Haine-san would definitely try to stop him, but...” (Karen)

Karen-san says this now.

“In order to increase the success rate of the mission, General Grades took on

the role of drawing attention. If the attention is drawn to General Grades, it would make things easier for Haine-san and Doraha-san.” (Karen)

“Seriously?!” (Haine)

The place where General Grades is heading to is without doubt the front entrance of the library.

At that place, there’s still Dobbe who is doing his habitual rambling speech.

“That’s bad!! Standing in front of Dobbe who is definitely the one that has the most grudge of being fired from his position as a Knight General, if the current General that is Grades were to do that...!” (Haine)

“Haine-san!” (Karen)

I was about to stop General Grades, but Karen-san stopped me.

“...Grades-san is...the person that truly deserve to be the Aurora Knight corps’ General.” (Karen)

“Karen-san?” (Haine)

“Since the time he was a vice-captain, he has been thinking about the knight corps more than anyone else. He wasn’t born in an influential family, and rose up to vice-captain without a single thing backing him. But...” (Karen)

That was by no means because he was greedy for promotion.

That bald man was always treasuring the organization —the people that conform this organization, and aimed for battle formations that would allow people to fight at their best.

The amount of times that he has argued with his superiors that only saw for themselves were many.

“That person knows pretty well the meaning of fighting to protect. That’s why Yorishiro-sama selected him as the new General when the reformation came.” (Karen)

And now General Grades has decided on the most definite method to increase the chances of success. In order to make the mission a success, in order to protect the citizens.

“You can’t get in the way of the General! We have to do what we must do!”
(Karen)

The scold of Karen-san had already stopped my feet, but my gaze couldn’t help but chase the back General Grades.

And then, that person finally arrived at the front entrance of the library.

“Huh? What’s the matter with you?!” (Dobbe)

The bald man introduced himself to Dobbe who had already fallen to being a mere terrorist.

“Aurora Knight corps’ General, Dillon Grades-sama for you!” (Grades)

Chapter 232: Necessary person

“Aurora Knight corps’ General? Hmm, that’s strange.” (Dobbe)

Dobbe was already a terrorist no matter where you look at him, but his attitude was still as if he were at the summit of everything.

“When talking about the General of the Aurora Knights, there’s only one in the world, and that is Zeberphon Dobbe. Taking my title without my permission is quite the rude thing to do, Vice-captain Grades.” (Dobbe)

“You were not only fired from your position as General but from the Aurora Knights itself. You already don’t have the right to be called a knight. Moreover, taking over a public facility at broad daylight and even bringing harm to the citizens; you can’t even be called a human anymore, you are trash.” (Grades)

Grades takes a single breath before continuing.

“I will give you a chance. Surrender yourself now and receive your punishment. If it’s now, it should still be possible to give some pity to your verdict.” (Grades)

“Don’t joke around!!” (Dobbe)

Dobbe shouts and throws the ethereal speaker to the ground. Its fragments fly around with force.

“I -the Aurora Knight’s General-has stood up for the sake of justice! In order to bring justice to that damn Yorishiro that monopolizes the Light Church! In order to bring back true justice to the Church!!” (Dobbe)

“What are you referring to by true justice? Are you talking about the knight corps that you were in before?” (Grades)

The tone of General Grades had become that of a person dealing with an unruly child.

“In your time as a General, you were doing whatever you pleased, and I who was being swung around also couldn’t take it. Even when monsters appeared, you didn’t want to leave the headquarters, and when there was no choice but

to depart after delegating the leadership, you then began to wail about taking command yourself while you were still in headquarters.” (Grades)

How unreasonable.

“How much distance do you think the headquarters are from the actual spot? ‘Don’t take one step unless I order it’, you said. If you had at least used an ethereal car to reduce the time to arrive at the place, it would have been better. What you were saying to the light knights was basically this: ‘Die’.” (Grades)

And in reality.

“If the hero Karen-sama hadn’t been with us, who knows how many light knights would have died because of you. Even if the ones that dealt the actual fatal damage were the fangs and claws of monsters, the one who did the killing were incompetent superiors like you. It is already a legit sin to have incompetent people -with only their big pride to talk about-standing at the top. And there’s many more where that came from...” (Grades)

You could feel the thick resentment of Grades in the times when he was a vice-captain.

“Just because the garden of someone’s house was beautiful, you would drive away the residents and put them in direct control of the knight corps; you would take the horses that the newcomer knights were riding just because they are good. There wasn’t a single order of yours that could be considered that of a General. The moment Karen-sama had become a hero and began to distinguish herself, you demanded everyone from the knight corps to sign a declaration that we won’t acknowledge Karen-sama as the hero. At that time, I felt like killing you. Being unable to actually do it has made me regret it all this time.” (Grades)

“What?! You mere Vice-captain dares to!!” (Dobbe)

The direct provocation of General Grades had immediately made the incompetent Dobbe rage.

“Don’t joke around, fake! A commoner like you with your dirty blood standing as General is an unforgivable sin in itself! A high-class position is fitting only for

humans of high-class lineage! And that person is I -the head of the Zeberphon family!” (Dobbe)

“A high-class lineage rises by accomplishing the duties that they have to do. If trash like you were to leave descendants, the Zeberphon ancestors would be crying from six feet under! Listen well!” (Grades)

General Grades throws away the sword that was wrapped around his waist, the sword that could be said to be the proof of his status as a light knight, and raises his unarmed hands.

“I won’t put a single finger on you. If I were to scratch you, the hostages won’t be safe, right? That’s why I will only look down on you. I will look down on you thoroughly. If you have at least a little bit of conscience as the Aurora Knight’s General, be ashamed to the extreme!!” (Grades)

“D-Don’t get closer! If you get any closer, I will...!” (Dobbe)

Dobbe points the muzzle of the ethereal gun that was hanging at his side towards Grades.

It is similar to the wind guns that the wind hero Hyue and the others use, but this one most likely shoots bullets purely out of ethereal power.

It is a dangerous weapon that has plenty enough power to kill people.

Even so, General Grades didn’t falter.

“Listen well! In the first place, your post isn’t something that you grasp just because you wish for it! It is entrusted to you by a person that is far higher than you! Once you are acknowledged, you can’t refuse no matter how much you want to! That’s how duties and titles work!!” (Grades)

Overwhelmed by the aura of General Grades, Dobbe takes one step back with his gun still in position.

“Even I don’t have the confidence to do it! In this time when it is the most busiest of all, I was made the helmsman of the Aurora Knights. The hundreds of knights, and the several hundred thousands of people that those knights must protect. That’s the amount of people that are on our shoulders! That’s the amount of responsibility! If possible, I would want to run away. But now that I

have been chosen to do it, I can't run away from it!!" (Grades)

Once ordered by someone high, you are also pushed to move higher.

"You damn brat Dobbe! Did you have that much of a resolve? At the times when you were the Aurora Knight's General, did you ever feel the responsibility that comes with it?! You haven't, have you?! I can say this with confidence! You only saw your duty as General as some sort of game! And in that game, we were the ones being played! That's why you are incompetent!!" (Grades)

"Ugh!!"

"Right now you are the same as a child wailing after having your game taken! But of course, the position of General is not a game! There's no logic where society should suffer for the tantrums of someone like you!" (Grades)

The whole body of Dobbe began to tremble.

General Grades... from the very beginning, I thought of him as a great person, but to think that he was a person that was able to bring out such pressure. No, that's not it. It is exactly because he has become the Knight General, it is exactly because he is the Knight General that he rose along with his position.

"Shut up shut up! Don't get close! Don't go speaking high-and-mighty to me!" (Dobbe)

The trembling finger of Dobbe squeezed the trigger, and finally, a bullet was shot.

Bang!

But maybe because Dobbe sucks, or because the ethereal weapon's calibration was not good, the bullet flies at an unknown direction.

It won't hit General Grades. It is not a trajectory that would hit him. But...

Splat

The bullet pierces the hand of General Grades.

He purposely moved his left hand to the trajectory of the bullet, and blood gushes out heavily.

"Why?!"

The bullet was completely going at a course that would miss General Grades!

Grades basically went and got hit himself.

“Where are you aiming?!” (Grades)

“Awawawawa!!” (Dobbe)

“Don’t go shooting at random places!! What are you gonna do if you hit a citizen?!” (Grades)

Amazing.

That person is already winning purely by pressure! —Ouch!

Someone suddenly hit my head!

“Haine-sama, it is time.” (Doraha)

Doraha was the one who hit me huh.

“General Grades is pulling the attention. This is the time to infiltrate the library.” (Doraha)

Right.

General Grades was so overwhelming, I got enraptured by it, but this mission, the core of it is for us to infiltrate the inside.

But that’s how effective it was.

Karen-san had finished all preparations and stabilized the course in the time Grades was buying. And now, it would be our turn to use that opening.

“Let’s go, Haine-sama. Please hold onto me tightly.” (Doraha)

Doraha holds my hand and we slowly sink into the shadow of the flying machine.

First the legs, then waist, and when it finally came to the head, all vision was lost.

“Woah?! ”

Thanks to holding hands with Doraha, the shadow had accepted me as a target of the technique.

Just like how she had explained, it was truly as if we were inside water. At the other side of what felt like a domain of water, I was able to slightly tell what was happening outside.

“Here we go!” (Karen)

I could hear the voice of Karen-san outside the shadow.

The Light Grand Church; the plan to save the hostages had truly begun now.

Chapter 233: To the gunpowder warehouse

Entering a shadow felt mysterious.

It is as if we were being moved along with the water tank.

It felt as if it would continue endlessly and we were being pushed to the inside of a wall.

When I look up, I could see the flying machine as if seeing it through a water surface.

(Haine-sama, please don't lower your guard. Karen-sama will most likely only pass the skylight for a second.) (Doraha)

The voice of Doraha also travelled to me in a totally different way from a normal space.

(The moment the flying machine's shadow overlaps with the shadows of the objects inside the library, we will jump to that one. With that, we will be able to infiltrate the library.....but be careful.) (Doraha)

Hm?

(Haine-sama is not a shadow user and simply entered the shadow with me as proxy. If at the moment when we jump to the other shadow you are left alone inside the shadow, who knows what would happen. Even I don't know.) (Doraha)

What's with that?! What a scary prospect!

I would be instantly shut inside the shadow then?!

No, that would still be fine, but if I were to lose the guide that is Doraha and I am unable to leave the shadow for the rest of my life and have to stay there all alone...just imagining it sends shivers to my spine!

(Haine-sama, Haine-sama, the infiltration has been completed.) (Doraha)

You serious.

(That's why I said it would take an instant, didn't I?) (Doraha)

Right. When I look up, I could see the skylight that reflects the sky, and the figure of the flying machine is not there anymore.

“Oi!! How long is that ‘Knight General’ guy supposed to be outside?! He has told them our demands already, I hope.”

“Like I would know! ...That idiot, just because this is his homeland, he acts as the leader. He isn’t of use at all!”

“Someone go to the entrance and check out what’s going on! If that self-proclaimed Knight General-sama is still blabbering, shoot him death!”

“You go! Who are you ordering, you heathen?!”

...?

Things are strange here?

They don’t feel at all like terrorists that have taken arms in order to fight the nation’s power.

(Haine-sama, for now, let’s surface. Staying too long inside the shadow is not good.) (Doraha)

Right.

For now, I leave everything to Doraha and move through the shadow, and surfaced on a place where we can properly hide our bodies from the terrorists.

The characteristic smell of paper and ink was permeating this library.

Since this is a library, I thought that we wouldn’t have any problems finding a place to hide due to the many bookshelves lined up, but the enemies are terrorists. The bookshelves are being used as barricades and to block the door of this place.

As if saying that the books inside of it were in the way, the books were scattered everywhere.

“How terrible.” (Haine)

We managed to surface from the back of the desk that the librarian uses and hid our bodies there as we look around the place.

There’s the hostages.

They have been gathered at a corner of the room, their numbers are close to a hundred, and surrounding them, there's clear ruffians with their swords unsheathed

But those are not the only weapons those guys have on them...

"That shape...they look similar to the wind guns that the Wind Church uses."
(Doraha)

Doraha whispers.

"They are the same as the one Dobbe was using outside. Damn it. So ethereal weapons were really circulating from behind the scenes huh." (Haine)

That truth was, frankly speaking, a headache-inducing problem on the level of the Demon Lords.

But let's concentrate on what we have in front.

"Doraha, I have thought of something." (Haine)

"What is it?" (Doraha)

"Your shadow, can you move it to a faraway place without being noticed?"
(Haine)

"As long as the shadow is connected to another shadow, it is possible to move through each shadow. As long as another thing's shadow overlaps with the shadow." (Doraha)

I see. An interesting power.

Depending on the application of the divine power, it can spread endlessly then. I don't know if that's a good or a bad thing though.

I once again look around. I catch sight of one that looks to be part of the terrorists.

Of course, there's no way the terrorists here in the 'Goddess Space' are all of them.

Counting Dobbe who is bawling outside, there should be lookouts in different locations.

But it doesn't change the fact that this place is where the kernel of the

terrorist group is.

First, we will take control of this place, and take a foothold towards the resolution—but the situation is always taking one step ahead of us.

From within the group of hostages, one specially loud voice was raised.

It is a little girl.

Her age is around 6-7 years old. This girl that had come to the library to read picture books like any other day, but had been caught in this unreasonable situation.

That crying voice of hers was probably a cry for help. Maybe to her parents, or to any other adult. But there were many in this room that would get rubbed in the wrong way by the cry of this young girl.

“Shut up, shitty brat! Stop the crying!”

“Just kill her! There’s plenty hostages anyways! It won’t change with one or two missing!!”

“If we show example, the bunch will certainly be silent! These are the trash of the Light Church anyways! The lives of heathens are the same as trash!!”

“Let’s offer the death cries of these heathens to Nova-sama!”

“Divine punishment on the holy name of Coacervate-sama!!”

The terrorists raised gleeful voices.

“Those guys...!” (Doraha)

The expression of Doraha turned visibly ferocious as she heard them.

That was a sign that she was changing into the ‘Shadow’ that engulfs the world.

“Calm down...!” (Haine)

I grabbed the shoulders of Doraha tightly.

There’s no need for you to become that fiend.

If these people need divine punishment, I -the Dark God Entropy-will provide exactly that to them.

I have plenty of divine punishment for everyone.

Chapter 234: Well-deserved divine punishment

“Smite these heathens, Mother Earth Mantle-sama!”

“Punish this foolish heathens, Wind God Quasar!”

What bothers me about this people is that the Gods that are coming from each of their mouths is different.

Until now, I thought that this incident was caused by the people driven out from their position in the Light Church by Yorishiro and were displeased by it. But the point that there weren't enough people for that in this occasion came out as a point in the meeting.

It looks like there's still more to uncover in this. But let's leave that for later.

For now, let's just wipe these idiots out.

That's all I have to do right now.

“Okay.” (Haine)

I jump up top of the librarian desk I was hiding in.

A *pang* sound was made, and the ears of the idiots reacted and gathered all at once to where I am.

“Good evening, fools.” (Haine)

Even when dealing with idiots, greetings are important.

Looks like they have enough neurons to get surprised and confused.

“Who are you?! From where did you come from?!”

“Are you from the knight corps?!”

“Don't get close to him carelessly! We don't know what he might be hiding!”

The panic in them was clear and, just by seeing that, I could tell that the other side is made up of amateurs.

But I can't lower my guard.

Even amateurs can kill by swinging a sword. Moreover, most of the people here are holding weapons resembling wind guns that might have been made from ethereal.

I can deduce that, instead of utilizing wind divine power like the wind guns of the Wind Church, they utilize ethereal to power itself, so anyone can utilize it.

It would be incredibly bad news if they were to continuously shoot something like that.

I may be repeating myself here, but this is a very delicate place to fight in.

They have over a hundred people as hostage and the place itself is a library that has important documents. The lives are important, but the records of the past people that are basically the materialization of the effort of many are also important.

I have to properly protect them both.

I won't allow them to die because of these idiots.

"...I came here with a present for you people." (Haine)

That's why I showed myself.

If an unknown factor like me were to appear, their attention would be drawn to me, and their muzzles will also point at me.

Even if a misfire occurs, it is better if those shots are directed at me.

"You people are requesting for divine punishment, right?" (Haine)

That's why, I will be providing it.

"I have plenty to serve." (Haine)

At the same moment as I finish saying this, in this Goddess Space that is at the center of the Light Grand Library, right at the feet of the close to 30 terrorists, black beasts appear all at once.

""""Gyyyyyaaaaa!!""""

And screams of fear were raised at the same time.

All the terrorists, without exception, were covered by something black and were unable to move.

“[Dark Matter, Set]” (Haine)

That’s dark matter.

They are small dark particles, but by having several millions to billions of them bunched up, they can act like living beings without clear form.

This time, it felt as if sentient liquid was attacking people —as if trying to devour them.

On top of that, their origin point wasn’t from me.

It looked like they had come out from below the feet of each one of the terrorists all at the same time, more specifically, their shadows.

For the ones that don’t know anything, it would look as if their very shadows are attacking them.

The trick of this is a combination of the shadow ability of Doraha and my darkness ability.

With Doraha’s shadow power, she can connect the shadows created by the objects in the surroundings to mobilize. I poured dark matter inside of this passage.

By the time I appeared in front of the terrorists, that preparation had been finished and the inside of the shadows were already filled with dark matter.

Foolish terrorists, fear your very shadows.

With that much preparation, I just had to let the dark matter gush out from inside the shadow and have it attack the terrorists -all at the same time. Like that, it would be impossible for the terrorists to fight back at all.

“Ugyaaaa!! What?! What is this!!”

“Darkness! Darkness is attacking us?!”

“Oh God, please save us!”

They were screaming while being enveloped by the darkness, trying their hardest to resist, but all of that in vain. Trying to brush away dark matter that

has already stuck onto you is close to impossible. To do that, you would have to do something similar to what the Demon Lord Uriel did —rip your skin off.

“I have intentionally made the speed at which the dark matter attacks you slow.” (Haine)

Properly understand that you are being eroding and taste ultimate fear. Then, take notice of the sin you have committed, and the punishment you are receiving for it.

“This is how divine punishment truly works.” (Haine)

“””””Agyaaaaa!!”””””

The library had become completely silent.

Having erased most of the divine power that allows proper life functions to operate, the terrorists lost consciousness.

“Looks like it is over.” (Haine)

Now that the inside had returned to safety, Doraha used the transmission device to contact the outside.

“Haine-sama, I have reported to the headquarters that we have taken control of the ‘Goddess Space’. The light knights have already charged in and are apprehending the lookouts one after the other.” (Doraha)

“Umu, good work.” (Haine)

I had lifted up the girl that was crying and am currently searching for her mother.

Looks like they got separated because of this incident.

“But they really lacked more backbone than I expected.” (Haine)

That worked in our favor, but what helped out the most was that the ethereal guns they have were of no use at all.

They desperately tried to resist as they were being engulfed by the dark matter, and they obviously pulled the trigger to do that, but most of the guns ended up exploding.

“Now that I think about it, Hyue said this. In order to make ethereal weapons, technique that normal scientists wouldn’t have enough is required.” (Haine)

“The utilization of ethereal weapons still has a lot of problems regarding the technological area before actually being usable. I think it would require a lot of time before we see actual use to it.” (Doraha)

In a sense, that’s good news.

It might have been luck that the gun of Dobbe actually managed to shoot.

“And so, these people were given defective goods huh. The more we learn about them, the more pitiful they sound.” (Haine)

Makes me the more interested in the circumstances behind the scenes.

Even if I had dark matter erase the divine power of the terrorists, it is not as if I have dried them completely out of it. They still have the required amount to maintain their lives, and they should wake up in time.

When that time comes, we will start with the fingernail interrogation imparted by Sasae-chan.

“At any rate, the release of the hostages is of highest priority. Let’s guide them all outside.” (Haine)

“Yes, Haine-sama.” (Doraha)

And so, right at the moment we were helping the hostages stand up...

“Don’t move! You corrupted beings!!”

The door was kicked open, and the one who appeared was...Dobbe.

His last useless struggle was about to begin.

Chapter 235: Exit of the buffon

“...Dobbe!” (Haine)

Why is the guy, that was quarrelling with General Grades outside, currently here?

Dobbe, who had suddenly appeared, had his face smashed up and was dirtied with tears and snot. His stomach and liver must also be in a precarious state due to the pressure exerted by General Grades.

After being talked down completely, he must have ran back here and encountered us in control of the place. Because of that, he succeeded in running away from the light knights that charged in and managed to reach all the way here?

You could say he is lucky, but can you really call this luck?

“You pieces of trash! Idiots, incompetent bastards!” (Dobbe)

It looks like he already has no energy left, there’s no strength in his insults.

“Why are you treating me this way! I am from the renowned Zeberphon family! I am important! I am different from you people that were born in the lower classes. Isn’t it obvious that the lowly should show absolute obedience to the noble ones?!” (Dobbe)

“Noble humans have their respective duties as well.” (Haine)

I decide to answer him.

“You have neglected those duties; no one will respect you. That’s all there’s to it. General Grades should have told you the same. How many times do you need to be told for you to understand?” (Haine)

“Shut up!!” (Dobbe)

Dobbe was already losing his sanity.

“I am the Knight General!! I am the greatest! Respect me! Praise me! Obey me!! You lowlifes only have that trait going for yourselves, and yet, why are you opposing me all the time?!” (Dobbe)

No matter how hard you shout from that dry throat of yours, this was only the bark of a sore-loser already.

I am tired of this.

“...Give it a rest already.” (Haine)

I said this feebly.

“This world is wrong. Being in this rotten world in itself is a mistake. I will die. Die and go to where the Light Goddess Inflation is. I will have her reincarnate me in the correct world. That’s my *only* hope left!” (Dobbe)

At the same time as he said this, Dobbe opened up the vest of the terrorist garment he wore, and what was inside of that vest was...!

“No way!” (Haine)

I have seen that before.

That’s the thing that pushed the hero match into confusion for a moment — ethereal bombs.

Those things that were knitted onto the inside of the vest Dobbe was wearing were similar to that ethereal bomb. Moreover, there’s several of them!!

“Light Goddess Inflation!! Pick up this abandoned lamb that has been thrown into the depths of despair!! Fufu, but let me at least give some payback. All of you will be accompanying me in death!! But obviously, I will go to heaven where the Light Goddess is waiting! You guys will be falling to hell though!!” (Dobbe)

“Damn it!!” (Haine)

I immediately spring into action.

I don’t know how strong those bombs are, but even if they were at the same strength as the one Mina used in the hero match, in this closed space, it would be plenty enough!!

Dobbe already had the control switch in his hand and placed his finger on the button.

“Be purified, evil world!!” (Dobbe)

...And then, pressed it.

*BzztBzzt**

Powerless sounds were made.

“Eh? Wa?!” (Dobbe)

I jump onto him.

Dobbe was unable to receive that force and fell onto the ground.

Without wasting a moment, I take off his vest and throw it up.

“[Dark Matter, Set]!!” (Haine)

I wrap the vest in mid-air along with the bombs by using my dark matter.

Dark matter doesn't only erase divine power. Because of its gravity, it can crush normal objects as well.

Inside the dark matter that performs true destruction, the vest and explosives were raising cracking noises as they were destroyed.

“Uwa...Uwaaaa!!”

After being stolen of his last card that was self-detonation, Dobbe began crying.

“How much more troublesome can you get!” (Dobbe)

“I don't care if you die or not, but there's a lot of people with raw hope here. Don't drag them into it.” (Doraha)

Doraha throws a merciless reprimand.

This man already didn't deserve a single sliver of consideration. But there's something I want to ask him before he dies.

“Even when I pushed the button...it didn't explode. That woman deceived me again...!” (Dobbe)

“Wa?”

Those words pulled my attention.

Right now I should be prioritizing the safety of the hostages, but I couldn't stop myself.

“That woman? Who are you talking about?” (Haine)

While I was asking this, I already had a slight suspicion of who it might be.

That woman had led the idiotic people like Dobbe and created the incident of today.

“I didn't trust her from the very beginning, but after being fired from my job as Knight General and the private funds of the Zeberphon household plummeting rock bottom, I had no other path but revenge!!” (Dobbe)

“I am asking who that woman is!! Answer!!” (Haine)

“Hihi, once I jumped onto her invitation, there were many people who had the same ambitions as mine waiting there as well. It wasn't only on the Light Church. From the Earth, Water, Fire, Wind nations, there were also people that were wandering the alleys after being thrown out by the reformation of the Church; those kind of fallen ones. That woman accurately found them and utilized them as pawns. Really, just in those areas, she is a skilled woman!” (Dobbe)

This idiot sucks at explaining!

Can't you just jump the process and say the conclusion only?!

“But this is all the fault of you people! You people did such a wicked reformation and drove off the ones with heart, so we had no choice but to desperately fight back! We are not in the wrong. The ones in the wrong are you people that forced us into arms!” (Dobbe)

“As I said! I don't care about that!” (Haine)

“But the one that is the most evil is the woman that utilized our distress to control us like puppets. I will never forgive that woman!! Now that it has come to this, I will destroy everything! Go ahead and interrogate me or put me on trial! I will fall, but that person will also fall along!! I will drag her along! Drag her! Drag her! Ahahahahaha!!” (Dobbe)

Just as Dobbe was laughing as if gone crazy, light was coughed out from his

mouth.

“Hah?!”

Coughed out light?

That strange phenomenon was completely unknown to me, but that abnormal event had triggered my danger alarm.

Chapter 236: Leave, light

Dobbe wasn't the only one spitting light out of his mouth.

The terrorists, those guys that are supposed to have been dried of divine power by the dark matter, are spitting out light just like Dobbe.

"What?! What is this?!" (Haine)

I couldn't understand at all, but there's no doubt that this is bad.

"Kugh!"

I went straight towards Dobbe.

He was the closest at hand, so I let out dark matter and try to erase the light that was coming out from Dobbe's mouth and nose, but...

"!!"

My darkness was easily cut by the light that Dobbe was releasing.

"So this is actually...!" (Haine)

Light divine power?!

There's no other divine power in this world that can eliminate my dark matter aside from light.

...Then, the light that is coming out from the mouth and nose of Dobbe is exactly as it is, light divine power.

"Haine-sama! Please stand back!" (Doraha)

The next one to move was Doraha.

Just like before, she utilized the chained shadows to sink the terrorists inside of it.

While that happened, an ominous change occurred.

It didn't end with only that. Now the terrorists began to let out light from their ears, eyes, and from every hole, and on top of that, their abdomens swelled up like a balloon.

It steadily swelled. It was at the point where they might explode at any moment.

Explosions would be bad here, but fortunately, the terrorists are sunk into the shadows and were completely isolated.

If light is the natural weakness of darkness, light's natural weakness is shadow.

The shadow becomes more distinct and deeper the stronger the light is, so by absorbing light divine power, it grows stronger.

If it's Doraha, once they have been imprisoned in her shadow domain, she can absorb the light that they are expelling, and manage to restrain them as well.

"Haine-sama!!" (Doraha)

Doraha warped her expression as she said this.

"Please get away from that man! Haine-sama is way too close to him. You will end up getting trapped inside the shadow with him!!" (Doraha)

"Got it!" (Haine)

Doraha looks like she is in pain.

Due to her hatred towards the four Base Element Gods, she once merged with the shadow and ended up maddening out of the amount of light she absorbed.

She has imprisoned around 30 people at once, and for some reason, they are all releasing light divine power. There's no doubt that this is surpassing the capacity she can take.

"Haine-sama! Quick!!" (Doraha)

"Okay!" (Haine)

I can't even begin to imagine what will be happening to them, but there's no doubt that it is nothing good. However, at that time, we definitely can't allow the unrelated people to get caught.

We have to sink all the terrorists here into the shadows.

But Dobbe...had tightly grabbed onto my hand.

“Wa?!”

Dobbe had both of his eyes releasing light, and his eyeballs were drying into raisins, and yet, he managed to accurately grab me.

How tenacious can you get.

“Now that it has come to this, I will die!” (Dobbe)

“Like I care! Go die by yourself!” (Haine)

I kick Dobbe and try to get him to separate from me, but maybe because he was squeezing out the last of his very life, I couldn’t get away from him.

While I was doing that, Dobbe’s body continued swelling —as if saying it was about to explode.

“But in the end, I will at least bring you down with me! You are at fault. All the misfortunes began after you appeared!” (Dobbe)

“What are you saying?!” (Haine)

“If you weren’t there, that brat Karen would have been obedient! That witch Yorishiro wouldn’t have become my enemy either! You are at fault...You are at fault! I will be dying, so you being alive would be unfair!” (Dobbe)

What selfishness!

At any rate, I try to get away with all I had, but his nails were digging into my skin and blood was already coming out.

I would have blown him away with dark matter right away, but because of the light that is spilling out from his whole body, darkness is completely sealed!

“Die, enemy of justice!! Light Goddess Inflation! Please bear witness to the last moments of the Light Knight Dobbe!!” (Dobbe)

Boom!

The sound of an explosion was heard from somewhere. It was inside the shadow.

The terrorists that had been sunk into the shadows were unable to endure the increase of light divine power inside of them and exploded!

Then this Dobbe in front of me will at some point in time also...no, this isn't just a 'at some point', he will definitely explode soon.

If that were to happen, how much damage would it cause?

Don't tell me it would blow up the whole library, right?!

"Haine-sama! Please get away from him, quick!! If we don't seal him inside the shadow...!" (Doraha)

I am truly glad that Doraha is here.

She has the power of shadows that has the absolute advantage against light, that's why she managed to suppress the terrorists completely.

The one remaining is Dobbe.

Doraha worked so hard already, so I can't let it all go to waste just because of this one guy.

There's only one way to have him sink into the shadows.

"RAAAH!!" (Haine)

I stop trying to push Dobbe away and instead plunged onto him.

Just like that, I sink into the shadows with Dobbe.

"As you wish! I will accompany you to hell!!" (Haine)

"Haine-sama! Don't tell me...!!" (Doraha)

Right.

I will also sink into the shadows with him!!

If it is inside the shadows that can block light completely, no matter how big of a light explosion it is, it won't be able to bring damage to the outside!

"I am...the Aurora...Knight General...! The renowned...Zeberphon family's...! Leader!" (Dobbe)

Dobbe had already lost his humanity. That's why I had no hesitation.

Sink the people that were once humans inside the shadows.

In time, my own sensations sunk into the shadows, and not long after, a

bright explosion occurred at close range.

Chapter 237: Broken Thread

The Light Grand Library incident ended safely that same day.

Fortunately, there wasn't a single casualty, and there weren't any losses in the books of the library.

The number of terrorists was 60, but they all died. It wasn't because of the fight between them and the light knights that charged in, but because they all self-imploded.

I don't know if calling it self-imploding is correct though.

According to the reports of the light knights that charged in, the terrorists that were working as the lookouts suddenly released light from their mouth and eyes, and just like that, their bodies swelled, and in the end, they exploded.

It was the same in the 'Goddess Space' where the hostages were being held captive in, but Doraha-san who had infiltrated there had completely sealed the explosion, and things ended with no happenings.

However...there was one thing that can't be ignored.

It was something that made me -the light hero, Kourin Karen-unable to feel that the incident is over yet.

It was something big.

At the Light Grand Hospital in Apollon City, at a section of it, we were standing there without a wink of sleep.

General Grades, who had finished his medical treatment, and Captain Vesage, who was absent because he was in another mission, were now running to where we were.

"Sorry, Karen-sama. Even when I was by his side...!" (Doraha)

Doraha, who was the one on site, was feeling the most responsibility of this out of everyone and was discouraged, but there's no way it was her fault.

Even so, I simply didn't have the words to say to her. No, it wasn't only Doraha, it felt as if I had lost all ability to speak at the moment.

If that person is gone, my whole world will be lost.

It felt as if this was an announcement to that moment.

With no choice, I pat the head of Doraha-san that is slightly smaller than me. I thought that this might help soothe her a bit.

...In time, the doors of the 'Operation Room' open.

The one that appeared there was the person we revere as Founder, Yorishiro-sama!

""""Yorishiro-sama!""""

A medical treatment personally done by the Light Founder.

That in itself is a surprising thing, but what about the result?

Is Haine-san okay?!

"Please be at ease. He is not the type of person that would die from something of this level." (Yorishiro)

"Then...!" (Karen)

I enter through the door that Yorishiro-sama had just come out from and looked at the bed that was inside.

There, I saw a man that was completely covered in injuries.

Haine-san was wrapped in bandages all over his body, but even with that, he was letting out relaxed breaths.

"I am so glad!" (Karen)

Strength left me and I was about to fall onto the ward's floor, but Doraha-san supported me.

Yorishiro-sama, who had performed the medical treatment on Haine-san, began to explain his condition.

"First of all, the explosion that is basically the reason for Haine-san's injuries. That in itself wasn't that big of a deal." (Yorishiro)

The strange occurrence in the library.

“Doraha managed to seal the group that had taken control of the Goddess Space, but the lookouts at the outside area also exploded. But those explosions simply destroyed themselves and didn’t do any damage to their surroundings. The light knights that were caught in the explosion didn’t have a single wound. The most that happened was that they were showered with the blood and entrails of the terrorists, which will definitely fuel their nightmares for a good while.” (Yorishiro)

I heard that report too.

That’s why this incident ended with no casualties aside from the terrorists themselves.

“But then why did Haine-san get so injured?!” (Karen)

“It is heavily related to the person himself.” (Yorishiro)

The power that Haine-san uses is darkness; and the biggest weakness of darkness is light.

Facing that explosion at close range, Haine-san ended up receiving the most damage he has received until now.

“In the operation just now, I retrieved the light divine power that was eating onto the body of Haine-san, and disposed of it. With this, the light won’t be corroding Haine-san further. What’s left would be to let his own body to recover by itself.” (Yorishiro)

I am glad...I am truly glad!

Haine-san didn’t die.

I wanted to hug Haine-san right this instant, but Haine-san is currently wounded and sleeping, so I can’t do something excessive, and General Grades and the others are here as well.

I desperately held back.

The men stood close to where Haine-san laid, and after confirming he was sleeping, they let out a sigh of relief.

General Grades and Captain Vesage.

“...This guy...he pushed forth without hesitation against what he feared the most. I thought that he feared nothing because he was strong, but it looks like I was wrong. Haine is truly a man that is strong at heart.” (Vesage)

“Hearing what Founder-sama said, there was probably no need for him to put his body at stake. But that was something no one would have known. There was the chance that the whole library would have exploded from that. If there’s a person in the light knights that says something like: ‘he got injured in vain’... Vesage, let’s beat that person up.” (Grades)

“Understood.” (Vesage)

In the beginning, they by no means got along with each other, but after a certain amount of time, Haine-san had created his own place in this Light Church huh.

After the tension dissolved, something warm spread inside of me.

“...In the end, all the terrorists that participated in this have all died.”
(Yorishiro)

Yorishiro-sama speaks out in a different tone.

“The only one we could confirm their origins was Dobbe who was making a ruckus outside. The other perpetrators, because they suddenly exploded for some mysterious reason, we couldn’t even manage to confirm their identity.”
(Yorishiro)

According to Doraha-san who was in the area, the terrorists were calling out the name of other Gods aside from Inflation-sama, and were glorifying them.

That means there were people of other churches mixed in this terrorist act?

But because their bodies had been blown up to pieces, there’s no way to confirm this.

“I think that was the objective of the explosion.” (Yorishiro)

“?! ”

I couldn’t understand well at first what Yorishiro-sama had said.

“It means that if the terrorists had been caught alive and they are made to speak their reason and the method they used to perpetrate their act, there would be a person who would be troubled by that. That person killed the perpetrators—if I had to put it in other words, that person cut off its lizard’s tail.” (Yorishiro)

“They did all that to seal their mouths?!” (Karen)

Then that means there was someone controlling Dobbe and the others behind the scenes?!

But to bring that person to light, we need some solid clue, but the people in question have been erased...

Chapter 238: If it's proof

"Yorishiro-sama, Sunnysol Ates has arrived." (Ates)

"Thanks for taking your time. Please take a seat there." (Yorishiro)

The day after the incident, the Founder Yorishiro-sama had called for Ates-sama.

The reason was because she wanted to show her appreciation towards Ates for helping out in the aftermath and to hear her report —at least that's the front.

"Ara, Karen-san, you were also here?" (Ates)

"Yes. As a hero, I want to have a grasp of the incident that occurred in my own capital." (Karen)

I -Kourin Karen-and Yorishiro-sama were sitting at the sofa opposite of Ates-sama.

I asked Yorishiro-sama to let me accompany her in this.

In order to witness the true conclusion of this incident.

"Well then, let's hear the report at once. Did you find anything?" (Yorishiro)

"Nothing that might gives us a full picture of the incident. The biggest objective of that synchronized explosion might have truly been to erase the evidence. The explosion not having much power and basically only serving to kill the people themselves makes this assumption stronger." (Ates)

In reality, that was a blessing amidst the disaster.

Aside from the people that were trapped inside Doraha's shadows, there were also more than 20 people at the outer areas that exploded as well.

If those explosions had power on the level of divine power attacks, it would have turned into a big tragedy.

"Because of that, it is now impossible to interrogate them. Not only were the corpses destroyed beyond recognition, but also anything that might serve to

identify them. I want to order the light knights to collect the pieces of those kind of items while they are dealing with the site, but not much can be expected.” (Ates)

“I see... I understand. Sorry for having you work all on your own.” (Yorishiro)

“Don’t mind it. Everyone was worried about Haine-san’s operation after all. And so, how’s Haine-san?” (Ates)

“No need to worry. The operation was finished properly and his condition is stable now. He regained consciousness not that long ago.” (Yorishiro)

Eh?

“That’s good to hear. When the situation calms down, I am thinking about giving him a visit though. Is that okay?” (Ates)

“Sorry to say but, that won’t be possible. Previous light hero, Sunnysol Ates, that’s because...” (Yorishiro)

Yorishiro-sama says.

“We will be apprehending you for this time’s terrorist incident as the main culprit.” (Yorishiro)

Pang!

The door of the room was open forcefully, and from there, several light knights rushed in, and then, surround Ates-sama.

I as well stand up from the sofa and take out my holy sword.

“This is...what is the meaning of this?” (Ates)

Ates-sama begins her usual self-concealment.

“This time there’s no point in playing the fool, Ates-san. Haine-san recovered consciousness and testified.” (Yorishiro)

“?”

“Zeberphon Dobbe, who tried to bring Haine-san down with him, right before he died, he told Haine-san that the one who ordered everything was you.” (Yorishiro)

“““!!!”””

We had already been briefed about this beforehand, and yet, everyone including me had gulped our breaths.

The culprit behind the terrorist incident of Apollon City was Ates-sama.

In a sense, it was a truth that I could understand.

“Ates-san, at the heroes match, you were acting as an infiltrated agent...is how it was left as, but utilizing the connections you had before, you gathered the dregs of the contra-reconciliation side that had lost their place to be—in order to perform your crime.” (Yorishiro)

“...”

“The objective was that, by creating a disturbance in the metropolitan area of the Light capital, you would have me take the blame, and make me resign to take responsibility. And then, you would carry on the next step.” (Yorishiro)

“...Okay, I will listen to this joke of yours till the end. Continue.” (Ates)

“You have the qualifications for that after all. In reality, you wanted to expel me at the heroes match and become the new Light Founder, but sadly for you, Karen-san and the others succeeded and you failed.” (Yorishiro)

But Ates-sama betrayed the contra-reconciliation side, and by selling them to the enemy, she managed to escape from a sinking ship. Not only that, she managed to secure a place in our side. Truly a despicable person.

“You wanted to utilize the strengthened footing you had to climb higher up—and in a sense, you were going to climb the last step for it, but...you were slightly impatient there. To think that you would bring out your tail in such a boring way.” (Yorishiro)

“You are quite the dirty woman, Yorishiro.” (Ates)

What a way to speak to the Founder. I can’t believe such a person was a hero.

“Well fine. Let’s leave it as if I was the puppeteer behind that incident. Let’s assume I was the one who was controlling that useless Dobbe who only has his pride to talk about. And so, where’s the proof?” (Ates)

“?!”

That question had made all the light knights and me falter.

“The one who pointed me as the ringleader has already died. Don’t you think that’s a bit too weak for a proof? In the first place, the ones carrying the terrorist acts normally are disposable pawns. Most of the times, they are not told a single piece of important information.” (Ates)

“...”

Yorishiro-sama didn’t say anything.

It is true that Ates-sama’s logic is sound, and it was effective in weakening the reasonability of apprehending her. Even though we know that she is the evil one here.

Will she slip away from our hands once again?

“Proof. If you want to judge me, you will have to properly show the proof for it. Can you? Well, I already know the answer though.” (Ates)

Ates-sama was speaking of proof as she showed her characteristic smile.

That’s how much confidence she has.

All the people that she used as pawns are dead and there’s no evidence left.

There’s no way there would proof pointing her as the ringleader.

“Then, Ates-san, let’s hear it from you.” (Yorishiro)

“Hm?” (Ates)

“Is proof necessary to judge someone?” (Yorishiro)

.....Eh?

The words of Yorishiro had caught everyone in this room off-guard.

“You being an existence that brings harm to the Light Church and the whole world is already an undeniable truth. I am asking if there’s the need for proof to judge someone like that.” (Yorishiro)

That surprising statement of hers had made Ates-sama dumbfounded, but in time, she began to laugh as if a spring had come out.

“Ahahahahaha!! ...Right, you are completely right. Leaving aside the trials that idiots in the streets do; between the noble people like us where schemes and artifices are the norm, legal principles and morals are all instruments. Trusting in the power of evidence was something an idiot would do, right.”
(Ates)

“That’s right. In this filthy side of the world you and I stand on, evidence is just an illusion that can be shaped as fit. And the very fact that you have no option but to rely on it is proof that you have been cornered. What’s left now is to gallantly accept your defeat.” (Yorishiro)

“Good grief. What a dirty woman you are. To think you would play me twice. No, in the end, there wasn’t a single time I have won against you in conspiracies. As expected of my little sister.” (Ates)

Huh?

“It simply means that you are just small fry, Onee-sama. You weren’t able to throw away that way too heavy ambition of yours —just like father. That is the reason for your downfall.” (Yorishiro)

Chapter 239: Dioskouroi

After laughing for a while, Ates-sama had her arms bound without much resistance and was led out.

Yorishiro-sama and I were watching that back of hers from the office room.

“Yorishiro-sama!” (Karen)

I couldn’t not worry about our Founder that was silently standing there.

Yorishiro-sama and Ates-sama are sisters.

This is the first I have heard of this.

“I am sorry, Karen-san.” (Yorishiro)

“Huh?”

But the words that were directed at me were words of apology.

Why?

“I wanted to have you be unrelated to this filthy secret feud, but with the opponent being a previous hero, it just couldn’t happen.” (Yorishiro)

She continues.

“This is the second time she has been caught. It won’t end with a lukewarm punishment like exiling her from the church anymore. No, I won’t let it end in such a lukewarm manner. I will have her live the rest of her life confined in a remote place just like father—at the very least.” (Yorishiro)

Like her father?

She must be referring to the previous Light Founder.

“Karen-san, my father -the previous Light Founder-was forced to stand down due to corruption, is how it is known as, but do you know the specific details of why he was driven out of his position?” (Yorishiro)

I don’t.

I honestly shake my head to the sides.

“Must be. Just the surface of it brought quite the damage to the Light Church after all. ...My foolish father...was planning on causing a war on the other churches.” (Yorishiro)

“Eh?!” (Karen)

A war...between humans?!

In an era where the battle with monsters was intensifying?

“That person...had a childish ambition like that of leaving his name in history by doing something big. And in the path for that, he resorted to any means. Ates who was the hero at that time was also cooperative in that idea.” (Yorishiro)

Yorishiro-sama stopped this in secret —the Yorishiro-sama that is the youngest in the history of Founders.

“As a result, the higher-ups of the Light Church at that time, who only knew about fattening themselves with corruption, saw my father as nothing but a pain. And so, I took the standard and expelled my father. And my sister who was involved with it as well was not chosen as the next Founder due to this.” (Yorishiro)

‘Even when they were filled with so much ambition’...is what Yorishiro-sama muttered in pity.

“She is the previous hero, the sister of the current Founder, and on top of that, the daughter of the previous Founder; as long as she kicks me down from my position, there was plenty enough possibility for her to become the next Founder. The many conspiracies that came from the heroes match must have had that as the last goal.” (Yorishiro)

The condition that that person brought out from the heroes match was the resignation of the Founders. It was quite the straightforward demand.

In this time’s incident as well, if Ates-sama had resolved it when the light knights had their arms folded, the evaluation of Ates-sama would increase, and the one of Yorishiro-sama would decrease... Was she aiming for that when she caused that incident?

“Karen-san, this type of unpleasant things will most likely occur from now on as well. But I want you and Haine-san to be as unassociated with what happens behind the scenes as much as possible.” (Yorishiro)

“Yorishiro-sama...” (Karen)

“You are a symbol; a symbol of unity between humans that will stand against the danger that’s called Demon Lords. And for that, you have to be clear and pure.” (Yorishiro)

The profile of Yorishiro-sama as she said this was incredibly lonely; painful.

Because she ended up having such a family, Yorishiro-sama, who is practically the same age as me, has to involve herself in all the scheming and artifices that occur.

Even though she is a normal girl when she is fooling around with Haine-san and I...

“Yorishiro-sama!” (Karen)

Right at the moment I was about to say something to her...

“Yorishiro-sama! Karen-sama!”

One of the knights that was escorting Ates-sama ran hurriedly to us.

“T-This is terrible! Ates-sama...! No, the suspect Ates suddenly got out of her restraints and escaped!!”

“What?!” (Karen)

Contrary to me who was surprised, Yorishiro-sama was calm.

“No wonder. Even if she were to obediently get caught, there would be no chance for comeback. In that case, it would be better to oppose as much as she can.” (Yorishiro)

But even if she were to escape, I don’t think she can do anything.

I only see this as Ates-sama running herself into a precipice.

“Yorishiro-sama, I will go!” (Karen)

At any rate, if Ates-sama has escaped, there’s no other one who can stop her

but a hero.

Haine-sama is still laying in recovery, and Doraha-san is acting as his guard, so I have to be the one to move.

“No, you can’t.” (Yorishiro)

But when I tried to run out from the room, Yorishiro-sama stopped me.

“I already said it. Karen-san, I told you that I won’t be letting you get involved with the filthy behind the scenes schemes. Most of all, the other side, even if she is a despicable human being, she is still a human. In this situation where you can end up accidentally killing her, there’s no way I can let you go.” (Yorishiro)

“But...! Then, are we going to let her escape just like that?” (Karen)

I thought that might be possible.

Yorishiro-sama and Ates-sama are sisters linked by blood.

Could it be that letting her escape like this is her last show of pity?

“I will go.” (Yorishiro)

Yorishiro-sama said something outrageous.

“I will personally put an end to Ates-san. I stand as the Founder and I am also her sister, so this is in order to rinse the shame of my family too. Even if I end up killing her with my own hands, I will accept that dirt.” (Yorishiro)

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Chapter 240: Fierce battle of the Goddess

“Catch the traitor Sunnysol Ates!”

“Founder-sama’s order was that it doesn’t matter if she is dead or alive! But don’t let her escape at any cost!”

“But Ates-sama is the previous hero!”

“We already know! But right now she is a traitor!”

“Let’s capture her inside the Grand Church! Don’t let this leak out to the outside!!”

The whole of the light knights were mobilizing in order to capture Ates-sama.

“Harden the security in all the exits! Don’t let a single thing about this be leaked outside!!”

The battle with Ates-sama had begun at the Founder’s office room.

On top of that, since Ates-sama had escaped while she was in the middle of heading to the underground prison inside the Light Grand Church, the chase was still inside.

We can’t let the ruckus reach the outside, so the place was filled with the spirit of finishing all this inside the church.

And now, Ates-sama stood before me.

“Ara, is this the point of reunion? That was a delightful escort.” (Ates)

Even though she is already just a pitiful escapee, Ates-sama wasn’t showing a single sign of being flustered.

The cold gaze of Yorishiro-sama was directed at that Ates-sama.

“So you really had noticed huh. Purposely creating a strange route for the chase of the light knights, we led you all the way here.” (Yorishiro)

“I was sure a splendid treasure would be awaiting me here after all. And so, you will be making me fight, right? Against that goody two-shoes over there.” (Ates)

Ates-sama's gaze was directed at me who was standing at the side of Yorishiro-sama.

That's right, this is the training field that the light knights use. The perfect place to rampage.

Ates-sama must have already known that a fight would be waiting for her here.

"In the heroes match, I couldn't play with you after all. This is a good chance, so let's teach it to you; the strength of the true light hero." (Ates)

"No need for that." (Yorishiro)

Just like we previously agreed to, Yorishiro-sama steps forward.

"It is my duty as your sister to bring you down. Sunnysol Ates, the second generation of vice in the Sunnysol family, I will be cutting this with my own hands." (Yorishiro)

"The reason you threw away the name of Sunnysol the moment you rose to the position of Founder was because of that, right..... But, fufu, are you serious?" (Ates)

Ates-sama faced Yorishiro-sama and laughed as if making fun of her.

"Yorishiro, to think that you would actually challenge me in power. You who only has ability as a schemer, do you really think you can defeat me a person that has climbed up to being a hero?" (Ates)

"Yes, it is exactly because I think that way that I am standing here." (Yorishiro)

Yorishiro-sama does one more step forward.

"Well then, Karen-san, please don't assist by any means." (Yorishiro)

"But Yorishiro-sama..." (Karen)

"You are the insurance in case something happens. If I were to be defeated, please smite that smear. But well, that will not be happening though." (Yorishiro)

The gaze of Yorishiro-sama changed from me to Ates-sama.

"I placed a lot of burden on Karen-san at the heroes match after all. I have to

break some bones here. Of course, I am talking about the bones in your whole body, Ates.” (Yorishiro)

“Interesting. Let’s see if the little sister can beat her big sister.” (Ates)

And then, Ates-sama takes a stance with her spear.

That is the personal divine tool of Ates-sama, the light spear, Cain?!

Why does she now have the weapon she didn’t have when she was apprehended?

“Did you go through the trouble of slipping past the guards in order to get that back? I didn’t know a person could have such attachments to that.” (Yorishiro)

“Now that I have lost my standing in the political world, the only thing that I can rely on now is my own strength.” (Ates)

Ates-sama spins her spear and sounds of stirred up wind were let out.

On the other hand, Yorishiro-sama doesn’t even have a dagger. She was completely barehanded.

No matter how good a person is at controlling divine power, it is impossible for normal humans to give shape to divine power.

Without divine tools to resonate with divine power and amplify it, everyone is simply a human.

That can be said to be an absolute rule in the five Grand Churches...or at least, that’s how it is supposed to be.

“How about you, Yorishiro? Even if it is hastily prepared, you have to bring out a divine tool, or this won’t even be a challenge.” (Ates)

“No, this is...plenty enough.” (Yorishiro)

Yorishiro-sama holds up her palm at Ates-sama.

“[Light Suppression Palm]” (Yorishiro)

“Ngh!!” (Ates)

It was at that instant, a gigantic and incredibly dense light divine power had

blown away Ates-sama's whole body from the ground.

What is with that dense lump of light divine power that is like air?!

It was acting densely as if it were vapour.

The light element, that is supposed to be the thinnest in terms of density, can do something like this?

Ates-sama got hit by Yorishiro-sama's attack head on and tried to stand up with her eyes going in circles.

"[Holy Light Destruction]" (Yorishiro)

From the foot of Yorishiro-sama, cracks similar to the web of a spider were being made, and when it arrived to the feet of Ates-sama, the light divine power that gushed from the pattern in the ground had blown Ates-sama flashily.

"Gahagh!!" (Ates)

Yorishiro-sama is strong!

I knew already, but she is strong beyond common sense!

She can ignore the common sense that there's the need to utilize divine tools to amplify divine power in order to actually use them in battle.

And with that divine power that Yorishiro-sama is releasing from her hands, she is overwhelming Ates-sama.

"Damn it!!" (Ates)

But Ates-sama was a light hero in the past; there's no way she would allow herself to get defeated like this.

She rushed straight towards Yorishiro-sama, and with that long spear, she thrusts it onto her!

"Yorishiro-sama!" (Karen)

Yorishiro-sama didn't show any signs of taking an evasive stance.

Different from the heroes match, that thrust of Ates-sama was filled completely with the intent to kill.

It was at a point that was unavoidable already, when...

“[Holy Claw Form]” (Yorishiro)

Yorishiro-sama made the shape of a knife with her hand and light divine power came out from it, shaping into a sword and stopping the spear of Ates-sama.

Of course, Yorishiro-sama didn't get wounded at all.

“No way!” (Ates)

“Onee-sama, this is your fate. Caught in the poison of political power, you only thought about climbing up, and as a result, the place you arrived at was a precipice with nothing in it.” (Yorishiro)

After clashing blades, the two take distance.

The light sword that was coming out from Yorishiro-sama's hand, by separating those fingers, the light sword separated into something that resembled fiendish spider legs.

“Your path is filled with too many corpses to be able to go back. Now that it has come to this, let me be the one pushing your back. Fall right down to the very depths where you won't be able to crawl back up anymore!!” (Yorishiro)

Chapter 241: Siblings battle

“[Light Calamity Palm]” (Yorishiro)

Light divine power is shot from the wide open palm of Yorishiro-sama, and the palm of light grows bigger as it goes. This palm that felt as if it were the very hands of God also looked like it were a giant spider attacking with those 5 claw-like fingers.

However, no matter which it is, there’s no doubt that this is the light that will bring the destruction to Ates-sama.

“Ates-san...no, Onee-sama.” (Yorishiro)

Yorishiro-sama speaks in a low voice.

“This is my last advice. Listen to it properly.” (Yorishiro)

“What is it?” (Ates)

“Throw away your weapon at once. Show complete obedience to us. If you do, this will end without having the need to take your life.” (Yorishiro)

“If I do that, what will happen to me?” (Ates)

“You must have an idea already, right? You will be moved to some remote island that is impossible to escape from and you will live your whole life there. If we win the upcoming battle against the Demon Lords, you should be able to live your life peacefully there. Live your whole life without the need of worrying about political strifes.” (Yorishiro)

This must be Yorishiro-sama’s last show of compassion.

There’s no way this person would truly wish to kill her blood-related sister.

“...Fufufu, seriously, what a wretched little sister.” (Ates)

Ates answers back with scorn.

“You knew from the very beginning that I would refuse that, right? But if you were to display compassion at the end, the people in the surroundings will see it as ‘a Founder that had to drink down her tears and serve punishment to her

relative'. Thus, your position as Founder will get even more stable. " (Ates)

"So you already knew. It is good that Haine-san is still sleeping." (Yorishiro)

The giant light spider that was released by Yorishiro-sama swings its claws as if jumping onto its prey.

"Farewell, Onee-sama. I hope this is the last we see of this kind of foolishness between humans." (Yorishiro)

The light hand is swung down.

This attack felt as if it were covering the whole training field. Me and the light knights, that were guarding the doors of this place in order to not let the now criminal Ates-sama escape, were overwhelmed by that tremendous power.

"This is the end...!" (Ates)

The giant hand crashed onto the ground and waves of wild gales attested to the terrifying power this attack held.

Ates-sama's body was most likely crushed by the giant hand.

This is the last moment of the enchantress that had suddenly appeared in the Light Church and had stirred up the place with all her schemes and tricks.

"...Is what you thought, right?"

""?!!"

From below the light hand, the voice of a person unbelievably resonated.

That voice is without doubt...Ates-sama?!

"There's no way. You are okay after receiving the 'Light Calamity Palm'? With the light divine power that comes out from the light spear Cain, you wouldn't have been able to survive!" (Yorishiro)

Yorishiro-sama was also unable to hide her agitation in this unexpected situation.

As if laughing at that agitation, Ates-sama speaks.

"That's right. It is true that with the light spear Cain I wouldn't be able to block an attack of this level..... But Yorishiro, in the time that I was made to

retire, did you think I did nothing?” (Ates)

“?!”

“In reality, the reason why I went so far as to use a farce like the hero match was to, of course, return to the Church, but what I sought for after that step wasn’t to obtain political power as the previous hero.” (Ates)

Military power.

“It was purely for military power. In order to take away what you want from others, the most effective way is direct violence. The light spear Cain is my strength itself, however, that’s not all there is.” (Ates)

“What is it you are trying to get at!” (Yorishiro)

“While I was in retirement, I utilized the superfluous time I had to train, and managed to obtain a certain new power. In order to properly utilize this power, there was the need for a new divine tool. A different one from the light spear Cain. That’s why I returned to the Church. The ore that serves as the material for the divine tools can only be found inside the Church after all!” (Ates)

The next moment, the giant light hand of Yorishiro-sama disappeared.

“?!” (Yorishiro)

Yorishiro-sama’s expression of surprise was a clear indication that she herself wasn’t the one that made it disappear.

In that case, there’s obviously only one person who could have possibly done it —Ates-sama.

The light hand had disappeared, and once again, that woman appeared in our field of vision with a spear over her shoulder.

A second spear.

In her right hand, there’s the light spear Cain; and in her left hand, there’s a second spear. This second unfamiliar spear was the total opposite of the light spear Cain; it was a dark spear dyed completely in black.

...Dark? No, I feel like that’s not it...

“What negated my ‘Light Calamity Palm’ was that spear?” (Yorishiro)

“That’s right. This spear itself is my new power. What comes out by altering light divine power; the ‘shadow’ power.” (Ates)

““‘Shadow’?!””

That word instantly made me think of Doraha-san; the shadow hero that holds the power of shadows.

“I secretly stole this second spear from the storage of the church, the ‘shadow’ divine tool. The trump card that allows me to show the power of ‘shadow’. I call it...” (Ates)

Ates-sama speaks in her characteristic manner.

“Shadow spear, Abel.” (Ates)

She then shrugs her shoulders.

“Really, that was close one. This was just finished the other day, you see. If things had played out at a sooner date, that attack just now would have been impossible for me to block, and I would have been crushed just like that.” (Ates)

“With the power of ‘shadow’, you absorbed my light divine power then.”
(Yorishiro)

Yorishiro-sama already knew the special trait of the ‘shadow’, so she says this.

“Correct. Using the shadow spear Abel to absorb it, I release it with the light spear Cain. This cycle that was created from my long training is impossible to be broken by anyone!” (Ates)

Ates-sama swings her light spear Cain. From the tip of it, a threatening flash was shot.

Yorishiro-sama dodged this deliberately slow attack of Ates-sama.

That light easily destroyed a rampart in the training field.

The rampart made big crumbling sounds as the splinters fly around. The light knights around were running to get away from it.

“!!”

Seeing this calamity, Yorishiro-sama’s expression froze.

“Do you understand now? That just now was the light divine power absorbed from you that had been shot just as it is. You are intelligent, Yorishiro, so you should already understand. All your attacks have already been rendered useless by this power.” (Ates)

The light divine power that attacks Ates-sama will all be absorbed by the shadow spear Abel and the light spear Cain will return it.

“All preparations have been complete. Now then, Yorishiro, I will be taking the Founder position that should have originally been mine. While at it, I will be taking that life of yours as well. As you already know, I am a greedy one you see. Everything that belongs to you, I will be taking it all.” (Ates)

Chapter 242: Shadow Calamity all over again

“[Light Suppression Palm]!” (Yorishiro)

High-density light divine power was released from Yorishiro-sama’s palm again, however, it didn’t blow Ates-sama away.

The spear that was wrapped in jet-black had absorbed all the light after all.

“Kuh!”

“It is useless no matter how many times you try. As expected, in this kind of situations, even the intelligent ones would do the same thing huh! They continuously repeat pointless things.” (Ates)

Ates-sama spins her two spears with an expression of victory.

Even Yorishiro-sama who can bring an output far superior to mine had the tables completely turned around.

That’s how strong shadow is against light users.

Originally, light doesn’t hold a disadvantage against any of the other four elements, and rather, holds a slight advantage to all of them. Also, against the rare element ‘Darkness’ that only one person in the world can utilize, the light holds an advantage that could even be considered the nemesis of darkness.

Even this element, that at a glance is all-powerful, has only one element that we can’t do anything against; that’s shadow.

The shadow is a pseudo-darkness that is created from light.

The stronger the light, the stronger and more distinct the shadow becomes. The shadow users absorb light divine power and power-up limitlessly.

This is not the first time we have gone against the shadow element.

In the past, when we journeyed to the Dark Underworld Country that no one knows of, we were attacked by a beast that was clad completely in shadow and Yorishiro and I couldn’t do anything against it.

The reason why we managed to return alive was because Haine-san, with his

ability to erase anything aside from light, was there as well. But right now Haine-san is still bedridden due to the heavy injuries he received in the terrorist incident.

We can't expect his assistance.

On top of that, Doraha-san who uses the same shadow power is currently guarding Haine-san just in case.

In the current members that can fight right now, there's none who can go against the shadow of Ates-sama.

"Hmph!"

Ates-sama once again swings her light spear Cain.

Yorishiro-sama jumps away from the light wave that was released and, losing its target, it destroyed the ground. The ground that had been gouged out horizontally made a tsunami of rubble, and the light knights, who were gathered up in order to not let Ates-sama escape, were running away from it.

"Ates! To think that you had obtained the power of shadow!" (Yorishiro)

As expected, even Yorishiro-sama had furrowed her brows at the precariousness of the situation.

"In the time I was brought down by you, did you really think that I was doing nothing but play around? I utilized that moment of leisure you provided me to its fullest." (Ates)

"Of course, I didn't think you were obediently passing your time without doing anything, but I thought that if you were to make a move, it would be more of a stealthy political move. I didn't expect you to put steady effort like this." (Yorishiro)

"Even when you are about to die, you still make fun of me huh. That's just like you." (Ates)

This is not good! Ates-sama —no, Ates is seriously trying to kill Yorishiro-sama, and Yorishiro-sama has no cards that can stop that from happening.

Yorishiro-sama also knows how powerless light is against shadow!

“Ates, tell me one last thing. How did you learn about the existence of the shadow power?” (Yorishiro)

Even when Yorishiro-sama had sweat flowing down from the tension, her eyes were still sharp.

“The power of shadows that is utilized by altering light is by no means something that can be noticed by coincidence. The only possibility is that you were told about this by someone or...could it be...!” (Yorishiro)

“That’s a foolish question, Yorishiro. If it’s something you know, I also know about it.” (Ates)

“?”

“I am you, and you are me...” (Ates) <I am thou, thou art I>

Ates takes a step towards Yorishiro-sama.

It was clear that she was moving to deal the blow that will decide the battle. In other words, she is going to finish Yorishiro-sama?!

“Hold it there!” (Karen)

I run and stand in front of Yorishiro-sama to protect her.

I direct the blade of my holy sword Saint-George at Ates.

“Karen-san!” (Yorishiro)

“Ara ara.” (Ates)

Even when I showed my resolve of joining the fray, Ates didn’t show a single sign of agitation.

“As I thought, this little girl is an idiot. As long as you are the light hero, you won’t be able to do anything in the face of my shadow spear. Don’t you understand that?” (Ates)

“Even if that’s the case, fighting to protect the Founder is what makes a hero! Yorishiro-sama! Let’s retreat for now! I will hold Ates back!” (Karen)

Of course, I who only has light as my weapon can’t defeat the current Ates. But even so, I will carry out my duty as a hero!

“Don’t, Karen-san. You should be the one running.” (Yorishiro)

Yorishiro-sama said strictly.

“Go to the hospital and bring Doraha-san here. To defeat the current Ates that has obtained the power of shadow, there’s no other one but Doraha-san that holds the same power. If you use your usual flying machine, you should be able to get there in a matter of minutes. Do it while I am holding Ates back... Go!” (Yorishiro)

Yorishiro-sama, I can tell.

In the few minutes I take to bring Doraha-san here, Yorishiro-sama will be killed by Ates for sure.

“I...don’t want Yorishiro-sama to die.” (Karen)

“Karen-san!” (Yorishiro)

“There’s the duty as a hero, but most of all, it is because Yorishiro-sama is a friend!” (Karen)

I don’t want to do something like abandoning a friend.

Just a while ago, Yorishiro-sama told me this: ‘I want you to stay unrelated to the filthy behind the scene schemes’. It has to do with avoiding any lowering in my image as a hero, but I could feel that there was one other reason for it.

Yorishiro-sama didn’t want to be hated...by Haine-san and I.

She didn’t want us to see how she used underhanded means to bring the downfall of her opponents and have us repudiate her —she was scared of that happening.

That’s how Yorishiro-sama is.

She hardens her heart with logic and intelligence, but inside that armor, she holds boundless fear towards making contact with others.

“I love Yorishiro-sama. I want to love everything about Yorishiro-sama!”
(Karen)

“Karen-san...” (Yorishiro)

“Loving a person by just seeing the beautiful parts of that person, I don’t think

that can be called love at all! Even if Yorishiro-sama tries to hide the parts that are not beautiful, I will step into it!!” (Karen)

That’s how I have gained many friends, that’s why, today as well...

“Let’s fight together, Yorishiro-sama! If today’s enemy is exactly that ugly part of Yorishiro-sama, as a friend of Yorishiro-sama, I will fight that enemy!!”
(Karen)

Chapter 243: What two can do

“Ufufufufufufu!!” (Ates)

Ates suddenly began laughing.

It was a laugh that I could tell was truly from amusement, but as expected, there was contempt in it as well.

“Karen-san, as I thought, even when you are an idiot, you are an interesting one.....no, maybe it is exactly because you are an idiot that you are interesting.” (Ates)

“I don’t feel like I am being praised here at all.” (Karen)

“No, I do evaluate you highly. You said something truly sharp. I am that ugly part of Yorishiro.” (Ates)

“Eh?” (Karen)

No, that was simply a figure of speech...

“It is exactly as you said. I am Yorishiro’s evil, Yorishiro’s darkness; are humans born evil first, or are they born good first? No matter the case, they will all have good and evil inside of them. However, it was different for Yorishiro and I.” (Ates)

“?”

“Yorishiro was the good, and I was the evil. We both were two and yet one. Therefore, I am her, and she is me.” (Ates)

What is she saying?

I couldn’t understand what Ates was saying at all.

“[Holy Light Destruction]!!” (Yorishiro)

It was at that next moment, the cracks that ran at the feet of Yorishiro-sama were letting out blinding light. The earth and pebbles making up the ground floated up, the earth split, and the footing crumbles.

The surroundings were covered in a cloud of dust so dense that I couldn’t

even see my own hands.

“Ara ara, Yorishiro. Taking away the vision? That’s an unsightly way to buy time for someone like you..... But don’t think you can escape by utilizing the dust. I am not easy to deal with, you know.” (Ates)

On the other hand, having suddenly lost my footing, I ended up falling down. Due to the denseness of the dust pitching in as well, I couldn’t even tell where I am currently at.

“Karen-san.”

As I was in this state, a hand was gently placed on my back.

“Yorishiro-sama?” (Karen)

“Don’t listen to what that person says. For that person, words are a tool to lead people astray after all.” (Yorishiro)

“Ah, yes.....Uhm, I am sorry.” (Karen)

“No, I was also saved by you. I am truly glad that you are our hero.”
(Yorishiro)

The reason why Yorishiro-sama raised a cloud of dust wasn’t simply to buy time, but for a more clear objective. In other words, a plan meeting.

“Karen-san, I think you already know but, now that Ates can use the power of shadows, she is the worst kind of opponent we can have. Even if we were to fight her together, I don’t think we can win.” (Yorishiro)

“T-True...” (Karen)

When we were attacked by the shadow-turned Doraha-san, our attacks didn’t work at all.

That situation has returned to haunt us again.

“But Ates isn’t a serious adversary compared to Doraha.” (Yorishiro)

“Why?” (Karen)

“Just like how there’s compatibility differences between the divine power users of other elements, the shadow users also have their own difference in compatibility. Compared to Doraha who had thrown everything away to

become shadow itself, the current Ates is basically small fry.” (Yorishiro)

“A-Are you saying there’s a way to win?!” (Karen)

As expected of Yorishiro-sama. She acted as if she was in despair, but she was properly looking for a way to turn things around!

“The past Doraha had completely turned into shadow, so it was possible for her to infinitely absorb light. Because of this, she was a fiend that could have destroyed the world..... Well, there’s still the possibility even now, so there’s always the danger of her going berserk though.” (Yorishiro)

But for Ates who had only chewed on the power of shadow recently, she doesn’t have that much capacity, is what she is trying to say?

If we were to push with Yorishiro-sama and I -two of the highest light users-, we can fatten Ates to her limit capacity and overload her.

“There comes the problem; the light spear Cain.” (Yorishiro)

The face of Yorishiro-sama clouded.

It looks like the cloud of dust hasn’t cleared up yet.

“Even when she obtained the power of shadows, she didn’t take her hands off her light element. Seriously, what an annoying ruffian. Thanks to that, she managed to resolve her own capacity problem.” (Yorishiro)

I see!

When Ates absorbed the light power of Yorishiro-sama, she soon released it with her light spear Cain.

By continuously releasing the turned back light that had been absorbed by the shadow, she can escape an overcapacity.

“To defeat Ates-san with that overcapacity as the aim, we have no choice but to surpass that capacity at a speed faster than the absorption and release rate..... But I currently have no divine power release technique that surpasses the one of the ‘Light Calamity Palm’...as a human.” (Yorishiro)

“?”

The last part was too low to pick up, but as I thought, is there really no way

for us to defeat Ates?

“At present, there’s no way to defeat Ates —if I was alone, that is.” (Yorishiro)

“Hm?” (Karen)

“But right now I have Karen-san with me. If it is us two, there’s a lot of things we can do that wouldn’t be possible alone.” (Yorishiro)

“So you finally come out.” (Ates)

The cloud of dust cleared up, and by the time the vision had grown better, Ates was standing in the same place as before.

Must be her leeway of being sure of her victory.

“Have you finished giving your parting words? Whichever the case, you two are not necessary in the new Light Church I will be controlling. I will have you two die right here and now.” (Ates)

At the surroundings, there were many light knights encircling the place, but no one could do anything.

There were many who were there to corner Ates in place, but due to the high level of the battle, they couldn’t interfere.

“There’s no need to get involved! Everyone, be on the lookout in case Ates tries to escape, and prioritize protecting yourself please!!” (Karen)

Chapter 244: Persona

Being cornered this much, there was only one thing Ates could do.

“Haaaaah!”

With the light spear Cain in her right hand, she receives the attack of Yorishiro-sama.

This wasn't to absorb like with the shadow spear Abel, this was a pure clash of same elements.

Ates and Yorishiro-sama; the one with the stronger light divine power output wins.

“Kugh, well thought! So you utilized the advantage of numbers to attack me from different directions!!” (Ates)

“In this moment where Karen-san is holding back the shadow spear, you have no choice but to fight against me with pure power. Ates, this is where you fall.” (Yorishiro)

Even if Ates is a shadow user like Doraha-san, they are different.

Ates can't even reach the feet of Doraha-san, who is the ultimate shadow user that can endlessly absorb light with her whole body. Ates can only absorb light from her shadow spear.

That's why, as long as we can pin down that shadow spear, it is basically as if we had sealed the cycle of light and shadow.

“This is your limit, Ates. You, who only thinks about using others, will never be able to win against the power of unity that humans obtain from cooperating!!” (Yorishiro) <Nakama Powah!>

In the first place, in terms of light divine power amount, Yorishiro-sama surpasses Ates —overwhelmingly.

Of course, Ates is also utilizing the light divine power she absorbed from me as well, but even with that into the equation, Ates won't be able to outpush Yorishiro-sama.

She has no choice but to be crushed!

“Nghhh!!” (Ates)

The light spear that’s trying to push away the ‘Light Suppression Palm’ of Yorishiro-sama was slowly being crushed, bend, and about to be destroyed.

The situation was already flowing into Ates’ defeat and it looked like no one could stop it anymore.

“Fufufufu...!” (Ates)

“?!”

“Splendid, Yorishiro, and also Karen-san; to think that you two would be able to corner me to this extent!” (Ates)

“Are you accepting defeat? Are you planning on begging for your life now? Too bad, but that chance had long been gone. I will be eliminating you as an enemy of the church and a threat to all the people that I love!!” (Yorishiro)

“Even though I am you?” (Ates)

“?!”

Again with those words.

For me, those words were a complete mystery, but it felt as if they held unmeasurable meaning behind it.

“Give it a break already! You are not me! Even if we were born from the same parents, we are separate existences!” (Yorishiro)

“The bodies we reside in have nothing to do with this. The amount of similarity we hold surpasses something like that. Let me show you proof of that. If I don’t, my life will be in danger after all.” (Ates)

“?”

And then, from the mouth of Ates, there was no doubt that the name of that technique was voiced out.

“[Light Apocalyptic Palm]” (Ates)

“Wa?!”

From the right hand of Ates, a lump of light that was several hundreds of times bigger than the opened palm of Ates was released, and it blew away both Yorishiro-sama and the light spear that was in the middle of both of them.

“Kyaaaaaaaa!!” (Yorishiro)

“Yorishiro-sama!!” (Karen)

No way!

Wasn't that a technique of Yorishiro-sama?!

Ates has the same technique as Yorishiro-sama?!

“This is not the time to be worrying about your friend.” (Ates)

“Ah!” (Karen)

The right hand of Ates was directed at me this time.

“[Light Suppression Palm]” (Ates)

“Uwaa!!” (Karen)

This is also a technique of Yorishiro-sama!

How is this possible. Ates can also use techniques without the need of a divine tool!

Then why has she been relying on a divine tool until now?

“Good grief. I wanted to keep this power a secret for a bit more. There's Haine-san of course, but it looks like there's also a troublesome one in the Wind side as well after all. I even went as far as putting up an act and making up facts in order to hide it, but it looks like it all went down the drain.” (Ates)

“Ates, what in the world are you!” (Yorishiro)

“As I have been saying, I am you. You reducing the area of effect of your ‘Light Suppression Palm’ to not get Karen-san caught up in the attack ended up biting you back. If you had used a serious ‘Light Suppression Palm’ from the very beginning and had crushed me along with Karen-san, you could have won.” (Ates)

‘As I thought, humans are living beings that are supposed to be used’, is what

Ates says as she laughs.

“In the end, this fight ended with me as the winner..... No, not only this fight, but the true battle that had continued for forever since the time we were born in this era. And as expected, in the human world, it wasn’t good that they looked for, but evil.” (Ates)

“You...what in the world are you saying?” (Yorishiro)

Yorishiro-sama couldn’t hide her confusion at the strange words of Ates.

“It is unnecessary to explain this to someone that is going to be eliminated right now. I will be efficiently showing my love to the Light Church and Haine-san, so you can die with peace of mind.” (Ates)

The palm of Ates is directed at Yorishiro-sama.

“Like hell I will let you!!”

“Woah there.” (Ates)

The swung down holy sword was easily deflected by the shadow spear.

“So you can still move with those wounds huh..... You are a truly courageous girl...and annoying.” (Ates)

“Kya!!” (Karen)

I received a hit from the handle of the shadow spear and collapse.

“Just stop it already. This shadow spear Abel is the very reason why I infiltrated this church. It is a complete waste to swing it against small fry like you.” (Ates)

No good!

My body can’t move anymore.

At this rate, we are going to be killed.

Not only me, but even Yorishiro-sama.

Normally, in this kind of moments, Haine-san would always conveniently appear and save us. But he is currently unable to move after having saved something more important.

There's no choice but for me to do something.

A hero is not someone that looks to be saved, but the one doing the saving!

"Karen-san!!" (Yorishiro)

I was trying to put my all into standing up, but Yorishiro-sama hugged me from behind.

"Your undying fighting spirit reached even me. Thank you. Really, thank you. You are the best friend I could have had." (Yorishiro)

"Yorishiro-sama?!" (Karen)

"Now that I think about it, you were always pouring priceless love and trust onto me. I don't know how many times that has saved me. You really are my hero. You are a true light hero." (Yorishiro)

What are you saying all of a sudden?

We are in the middle of a battle here.

"That's why, I have resolved myself. I can entrust everything to you. The one and only way to overcome this predicament. You will become a hero."
(Yorishiro)

Yorishiro-sama smiles.

"You will surpass a light hero...and become the hero of the Light Goddess."
(Yorishiro)

Chapter 245: God Hero

“Wa? What are you trying to do?!” (Ates)

Even Ates who was sure of her victory couldn't hide the trembling in her voice at the unpredictable development.

In between the space where Yorishiro-sama was hugging me in, a pure light I had never seen before was pouring out. But that was only the afterlight. Most of it was entering from Yorishiro-sama to me.

It was such a holy light divine power.

“Impossible. Yorishiro! Are you telling me you are pouring the soul of a God into her?! Into a lowly human?!” (Ates)

Soul of a...God?

“Since the moment the Demon Lords appeared, I have been researching all this time; the way to oppose that overwhelming evil. This power that I thought of in order to defeat the Demon Lords, it is not good to use it before we fight the Demon Lords, but I trust Karen-san.” (Yorishiro)

It is flowing into me!

The trust Yorishiro-sama has in me...is turning into overwhelming power!

“If the prayers of humans become the strength of Gods, then the trust of Gods in humans obviously turns into strength for humans as well!” (Yorishiro)

Power is welling up inside of me!

“Like hell I will let you!” (Ates)

Ates releases a light wave, but the attack was blocked by the light surrounding us.

“Karen-san! Brandish that power as much as you want! The current you has the power of a God while being a human, you are a Light God Hero!!” (Yorishiro)

Yorishiro-sama had already parted from me, and by the time I noticed, I was

already standing up.

My body is light. Not only that, I am overflowing with power, even when my whole body should be in tatters because of Ates' attack.

I don't know what happened to my body since I have been given no explanation, but there's something I understand.

I don't feel I would lose to anyone.

Even if those Demon Lords were in front of me right now, I feel like I would be able to win.

I raise up my hand towards Ates. I am not holding the holy sword Saint-George. It was a bare hand.

“?!”

From that palm, a light bullet was shot.

“What?!” (Ates)

I am now able to do divine power attacks without the assistance of a divine tool.

For some mysterious reason, I was not that surprised by this reality, and rather, felt as if it was natural.

The light bullet flew a straight path towards Ates.

Before it impacted, Ates once again held up her shadow spear and absorbed the light bullet.

“Fool! No matter what you do, as long as I have the shadow spear, all light attacks will—! Eh? Guaah!” (Ates)

Before Ates could finish her triumphant speech, an abnormality occurred.

The skin of her left shoulder swelled up like a balloon and bursted. Light divine power and blood flew around at the same time.

“Gyaaaaa!! I-Impossible! I can't properly alter and absorb it?! It is different from normal light divine power!” (Ates)

Yorishiro-sama speaks out to the flustered Ates.

“Ates...! I still...don’t know at all what you are... But you are not the only one... who has secrets!!” (Yorishiro)

Yorishiro-sama had a somewhat exhausted expression.

“What are you saying!” (Ates)

“Karen-san, at this moment only, is a human that possesses an ability of a God. It is a forbidden technique that Gods perused in the past. Karen-san has made that power her own at present with a human body.” (Yorishiro)

“C-Could it be...!” (Ates)

If it’s now, I feel like I can do anything.

I brandished the holy sword in front of me and pour power into that blade.

It felt as if the whole world was flowing inside my body.

The whole world’s trust, love, aspirations, jealousy, hatred; no matter the positives or the negatives, it changed into strength for me!

“Could it be that you have given her the ability of Gods to change the prayers of humans into power?! Are you an idiot?! If you do something like that...!” (Ates)

“I will shoulder all the burden! Karen-san, you and I are currently one. Act as you see fit! Like a hero! Like a God!!” (Yorishiro)

I gathered power into the holy sword once, and then, the divine power that was amplified by the ore returned to me. I move that divine power into both of my hands, condense it, and release it.

The ‘Holy Light Bisection’ that was incomplete, had now been perfected, and is going even further beyond.

Utilizing the image of Yorishiro-sama’s previous attacks...a light sword was created with both of my hands shaped into knife-hands.

“[Light Calamity Claw]...? No, I need to add the ‘Holy Light Bisection’ somewhere!” (Karen)

Maybe because the energy inside of me was going wild, I couldn’t create a sword with a beautiful shape.

It curved in a sinister manner, and rather than calling it a sword, it was more of a giant claw.

And there were two for my right and left hand.

Both sides were aiming at Ates. Cutting their way as if in a pincer.

“[Light Calamity Pincer]!!” (Karen)

They attack Ates as if they were giant light pincers of a crab.

Ates was not so bold to not feel any sort of fear towards that.

“Damn it!” (Ates)

She puts away the shadow spear Abel inside the shadows. In the exchange just now, she already understood that absorbing the light divine power won't serve for anything.

As expected of the quick thinking of a previous hero, but...

“Don't get arrogant just because you have obtained one ability of a God!! Someone like you, I can beat you head on with my divine power!!” (Ates)

A light hand expands.

“[Light Calamity Palm]!” (Ates)

That hand that looked like a giant light spider clashed head-on against my light pincers.

Both stop their movements the moment they collide with each other, and soon after, the hand was cut by the giant pincers.

“Aaaaah!!” (Ates)

“I can tell. What is currently flowing inside of me; this power that is mixing with my divine power and growing stronger...they are the emotions of Yorishiro-sama and many other people. Whether it is good or evil, a hero receives many emotions from the people. Now that I am able to change all those emotions into power...!” (Karen)

There's no way I would not be a match to someone like you!

“Damn it, damn it!!” (Ates)

The small body of Ates had disappeared into the dazzling light of the approaching giant pincers and was not possible to see her anymore.

And then, I myself was unable to bear the many emotions that were flowing into me, and my consciousness was cut off.

I couldn't tell at all what happened after.

Chapter 246: After-explanation

“She escaped.”

With the explanation that Yorishiro gave to me in her visit to my hospital room, I -Kuromiya Haine-learned about the many things that happened while I was lying unconscious due to my injuries.

It was today that I regained consciousness.

When I asked, I was told that it has already been four days since that incident happened, and that surprised me quite a lot. The other thing that surprised me were the details of the previous light hero Ates' capture and escape.

I am currently being told this by Yorishiro, but...the more I hear, the more troublesome it became.

There's a mountain of things I want to ask and hear about, but the first thing I want to ask about is...

“What is a God Hero?” (Haine)

It was a concept that was completely outside my knowledge.

I am the incarnation of one of the six Gods of Creation, the Dark God Entropy, and Yorishiro is the incarnation of the Light Goddess Inflation.

We are the very ones that created this world, and we should know all about this world, and yet, I don't know about this —this thing called God Hero.

What is that?

“That is the trump card I thought of in order to go against the Demon Lords.”
(Yorishiro)

Yorishiro said straightforwardly.

As always, I can't read this person.

“The monsters that the four Base Elements created have evolved to self-awareness, and the end of it are the Demon Lords that have cut off from the control of the Gods. Even if Haine-san and I were to use all our power to

subjugate them, it would most likely bring about heavy damage to the human civilization.” (Yorishiro)

True.

The scariest part of the Demon Lords is that they possess human levels of intelligence and move with a strategy in mind.

The Water, Earth, and Wind Demon Lords have their playful sides to them, but the one that seems to be their leader, the Fire Demon Lord Michael, felt completely different.

He saw the situation with a cool-head, and will achieve his objective by utilizing any means possible —for the sake of eradicating humanity.

“No matter how much of an ultimate power we hold, Haine-san is an individual. Even if we were to add me, it would only be two. The four Demon Lords can utilize their advantage in numbers, and if they were to move in a strategic manner, the battle between monsters and humans will be thrown into a muddy situation.” (Yorishiro)

“Even if we were to win that muddy battle, the human civilization will fall, and there’s the chance that they will receive permanent damage they won’t be able to recover from.” (Haine)

“And most of all, the peril of humanity must be resolved by the humans themselves. Therefore, I decided on trusting the heroes. In other words, my cute friend Karen-san.” (Yorishiro)

Yorishiro places her hand on her chest.

“I believe in Karen-san and have entrusted a part of me to Karen-san.” (Yorishiro)

“And that’s...a portion of your God power?” (Haine)

“That’s right. The hero and the God become one.” (Yorishiro)

And thus, God Hero huh.

“I have given Karen-san the God ability of ‘growing stronger by receiving the prayers of humans’.” (Yorishiro)

“Oi, that’s...!!” (Haine)

Isn’t that the root of all evil?

Aside from me who was sealed for 1,600 years since the creation of the world, and Inflation who lived as the summit of the Gods in that time; the other Gods -the four Base Element Gods-drowned in the power of prayers and began to glorify themselves.

But because the four Base Elements had indulged so much in the prayer of humans, they in time grew unable to live without them, and they began to lose their power as the era developed and the prayers grew less.

For Gods, the prayers of humans are the very definition of a drug.

“You made Karen-san shoulder such a dangerous thing?!” (Haine)

“Due to the many battles that Karen-san has gone through, she has obtained a big reputation unheard of before. If she could change those emotions from the people, she can become a hero that could even surpass Demon Lords. Also...” (Yorishiro)

Yorishiro continues.

“Leaving aside me who is one of the two poles, the other four Base Elements have weakened quite a lot due to the drying up of those prayers. Even if we were to distribute that power, the heroes wouldn’t be able to defeat the Demon Lords.” (Yorishiro)

“You...!” (Haine)

Could it be that she was not only going to do this with Karen-san but all the other heroes as well?

“Of course, I won’t let the heroes shoulder the burden themselves. The heart of humans that have good and evil in them, if there were to be a storm of several millions of emotions added to it, that would only serve to torment those girls. But by passing it through us Gods as a filter, we can decrease the burden to its bare minimum.” (Yorishiro)

The prayer energy that had led the four Base Element Gods into peril. By having only the God receive that demerit, the heroes will receive only the

merits of it.

“But if you do something like that, you will also end up like the other Gods! You managed to not put your hands on the prayer energy to maintain your power, and yet...!” (Haine)

“I am a human, but as expected, I am still a God. What God would I be if I didn’t move for the sake of humans?” (Yorishiro)

Is what Yorishiro said as she smiled with dazzling resolve.

She is trying to have the humans overcome their own peril, and, as a God, she is providing them the method to achieve it, and will also join them in the fight as a fellow human.

“Because of this battle, I had to move the plan faster than expected, but the result was decent. The power that Karen-san displayed as a God Hero was something that had plenty enough power to confront the Demon Lords.” (Yorishiro)

“But the very person, Ates, that went against that crazy strong power...” (Haine)

And so, we go back to the beginning statement of our conversation.

“...She got away, didn’t she?” (Haine)

“Yes, she got away.” (Yorishiro)

Ates was overwhelmed by this power that was on par to that of the Demon Lords, and yet...

“She escaped.” (Yorishiro)

There’s no point then.

Even when using such a trump card, they couldn’t manage to finish her.....No, for a human to corner Yorishiro so much is already an abnormal situation.

“That means, Ates was...a more dangerous opponent than we thought huh.” (Haine)

“Yeah. Even against the technique that surpassed the ‘Holy Light Bisection’ of Karen-san, right after she was crushed by those pincers, she used the power of

the shadow spear Abel to enter the shadows and, by crossing through the shadows of the rubble that were littering the place due to my 'Holy Light Destruction', she escaped to the outside." (Yorishiro)

The search is still ongoing, but we don't know her whereabouts at all.

"Ates and I had been acquainted since the moment we were born as sisters. Since we were the daughters of the Founder, we were of stature, and it was rare for us to play together. Even so, we knew of each other more than what we would know of a stranger...or so I thought." (Yorishiro)

"But that woman had something that was far deeper than what anyone would be able to imagine." (Haine)

In that case, Ates wanting to bring down Yorishiro to obtain the position of Founder and her trying to seduce me was not simply because she was hungry for political power, but because she had an objective that went further ahead from that.

But we still don't know what this further objective she has though —along with her own identity.

Chapter 247: True culprit

“Yorishiro, do you really not have a single inkling of the identity of Ates?”
(Haine)

Since I was sleeping when all that happened, I myself am more clueless about the situation.

“The one thing I can understand is that she is the same existence as us. She spoke as if she knew my real identity.” (Yorishiro)

Yorishiro’s identity?

Is she talking about her identity as the Light Goddess Inflation?

“I think Ates-san is the same as us. That’s why she knows about my identity and she also knows Haine-san’s identity. Her being blood-related to me might not have been much of a coincidence...” (Yorishiro)

“But there’s only supposed to be six Gods that created this world!” (Haine)

The four Base Elements, and the two poles; a total of six Gods.

Mother Earth Mantle was erased, and the Water God Coacervate was recently beat up and his whereabouts are unknown, the Fire God Nova is leading the lazy life of eating and sleeping as a cow, the Wind God Quasar has a cooperative relationship with us as the Wind Founder Toreido Shiva, and then there’s the Light Goddess Inflation as Yorishiro, and I as the Dark God Entropy.

“There shouldn’t be any other Gods aside from us six! Yorishiro, are you saying that Ates is a seventh God we don’t know of?” (Haine)

“I don’t know. But we are currently about to face the threat that are the Demon Lords, and this means that we now have a new opponent that might be as much of a threat as them.” (Yorishiro)

Ates is on the same level as the Demon Lords huh.

That I can’t think of it as a joke makes my head hurt even more.

“The only thing that could be called a saving is that we managed to purge Ates-san from the Light Church quickly. That person used the Light Church’s

authority and materials to plan many unsavory things. We managed to chase her away before all of those were finished. That can be said to be a blessing.” (Yorishiro)

“But it looks like you had to resort to quite a forceful method though.” (Haine)

I look at Yorishiro with a gaze of criticism.

The flow of the conversation changed again, and Yorishiro looked uncomfortable by this.

“From what I heard, I was the one who said that the main culprit of the terrorist incident was Ates.” (Haine)

The trigger to corner Ates was the terrorist incident that occurred in the Light Grand Library of Apollon City.

They attacked the library, and the terrorists that captured many hostages were actually the contra-reconciliation side that had lost their place to be.

Dobbe and the many other perpetrators now had a grudge on the Founder Yorishiro that served as the kernel for the reformation.

‘The one who was controlling this enmity was Ates’.

That’s what Dobbe told me before he exploded and I told Yorishiro after I regained consciousness.

That served as the trigger to actually move in order to apprehend Ates, but...

I am repeating myself here but, I regained consciousness this morning.

When Yorishiro and Karen-san were cooperating to fight Ates, I was out of commission.

How in the world would I be able to testify the crimes of Ates?

“Yorishiro, you...” (Haine)

“I simply took the most effective method.” (Yorishiro)

Yorishiro said this while looking at the scenery outside the window.

In the first place, Dobbe didn’t say the name of Ates once in his moment of death. At the end, he was rambling about his hate towards me and didn’t say

anything that would serve to resolve the incident. If he were such a key part in resolving this incident, he wouldn't have fallen so low in the first place after all.

And most importantly...

"If Ates was truly the main culprit, why would she make Dobbe and the others attack the library?" (Haine)

The objective of Ates was to push down Yorishiro and take the spot of Founder for herself.

What kind of meaning did the terrorist actions of Dobbe and the others serve for?

By creating chaos in the Apollon City that Yorishiro is in charge of, it would create doubt towards Yorishiro's guidance and it would lower the evaluation of her as a Founder?

Also, if Ates herself were to appear fast and resolve it quickly, her evaluation would increase, and the reputation might make a turnaround in the future.

I can't say there's no logic behind it, but it is so roundabout that I don't feel like it is intelligent at all.

If she were truly aiming for the position of Founder and she could use Dobbe and the other idiots as disposable pawns, it would have been a lot better to just try to directly assassinate Yorishiro, and if it were to succeed, everything would go to her.

And yet, why did a cunning woman like Ates do something so unlike her? Why did she play a card that only feels as if it were way too roundabout?

If we think of it as the main culprit not being Ates...won't it make more sense?

"Who was the one that profited the most out of the crime? If we think about it in that way, the culprit naturally comes out." (Haine)

I feel I was told that saying somewhere before.

"The biggest thing that came out from that incident was the purge of Ates. The one who wished for that the most was you, Yorishiro." (Haine)

Yorishiro didn't say anything.

“And the terrorists were not only Dobbe and the people of the Light nation, but also from the Fire, Water, Earth, and Wind nations. They are probably the remnants of a rebel group. By gathering them all, you made them dig their own graves, and finished them off. With this, the rebels from the world will be wiped out, and the world will finally be able to unite as one against the Demon Lords.” (Haine)

And so, their sin was pinned to the most problematic and dangerous factor that is Ates. If the incident is used as the pretext to apprehend her...

“It would be perfect.” (Haine)

Of course, there's rebel forces that Yorishiro and I can't grasp and are moving in the shadows of society, however, the big failure of the terrorist act would make the shadows return to a more conservative posture and not act rashly.

All the perpetrators died after all. The people, that are planning something similar, will certainly be quite scared.

Adding to that, the weapons that the terrorists held were ethereal weapons that are prohibited. Circulating through the underground routes, those things, that will definitely be a headache for the powers of the world, were completely useless when the terrorists used it and served as nothing but trash.

If that fact is circulated as ‘the sold ethereal weapons are useless trash’ and the impression stays, it would serve as a big obstruction to the circulation of ethereal weapons.

An effect that wasn't only two or three birds with one stone; that terrorist incident must have served as the best demonstration.

And so, we go back to the previous point. Who was the one that profited the most by eliminating the problematic political enemy that is Ates?

“...As expected, I am a cowardly woman.” (Yorishiro)

Yorishiro didn't turn her head towards me and simply spoke.

“I was so scared of being hated by Karen-san and you that I ended up pushing all the ugly parts of me to my sister.” (Yorishiro)

No matter what happens, I won't hate Yorishiro.

That cowardly part of her might unexpectedly be the identity of Ates.

The fight has ended, and yet, it didn't feel as if we have achieved something. Only the mysteries increased, and the unpleasant feeling of something stuck in between my throat remained.

If there's nothing gained from the victory, it doesn't feel as if we have won.

In the end, everything begins from here on.

Now that we have obtained the trump card that is the God Heroes, the real battle against the Demon Lords and the mystery shrouded Ates will truly begin.

Chapter 248: A place to return to

But before that...

Bam!, the door of the hospital room was opened.

“Haine-san!”

A shining holy woman rushed into the room.

“Karen-san?!” (Haine)

Karen-san didn’t show a single bit of restrain as she hugged me.

“I am so glad! You really opened your eyes! I am so glad!” (Karen)

Is what Karen-san says while crying on my chest.

She was this worried about me huh.

“What a helpless one you are, Karen-san. You must have received quite the weight after having become a God Hero yourself.” (Yorishiro)

“Haha, my body still feels a bit jerky.” (Karen)

Karen-san makes a wry smile at the words of Yorishiro. But she pulled the sleeve of Yorishiro and hugged both me and her.

“Ah.”

“Oh.”

Yorishiro and I were both inside the arms of Karen-san.

I felt like I could feel the emotions of Karen-san being transmitted through her tight embrace.

“I...don’t want to destroy this relationship.” (Karen)

“?”

“I don’t want to lose Haine-san and Yorishiro-sama! I want it to stay like this forever!” (Karen)

...

I couldn't say anything to those pleading words of Karen-san.

Humans are living beings that change. Living means change, and not being able to change for eternity is called 'death'.

...But Karen-san had something that she wishes it wouldn't change.

"Haine-sama, Yorishiro-sama..."

A small dark skinned girl nervously enters from the still opened hospital room; the shadow girl, Doraha.

She apparently was guarding me all the time I was unconscious.

"I am sorry. I was told not to let anyone in but...I couldn't just say no to Karen-sama..." (Doraha)

"It is okay. We have finished our talk. Visits to Haine-san are now allowed." (Yorishiro)

"Is that so?! In that case..." (Doraha)

Doraha seemed to be cheerful about something. She turned around and left the room.

"Everyone, visits are now allowed. It is okay to enter the room!" (Doraha)

The moment she said that...

Doooooooooon!

A wave of people flowed into the room?!

What's with this amount of people?!

There's easily more than 50 people here!

The hospital room had already become like a bargain sale!!

"Haine! Kuromiya Haine, are you doing good?!"

"That voice, General Grades?!" (Haine)

Now that I look closely, from within the black tumult of people, there's one spot that is not black —in other words, a bald spot.

"You are the pride of the light knights! Also, ouch ouch ouch! Who is the one

that is pushing the place where I am hurt!” (Grades)

Even when he became the General, he is still the same. He is still bald and hot-blooded.

“Assistant Haine! Assistant Haine!” (Vesage)

“That voice, Captain Vesage!” (Haine)

“As a get-well present, I brought you a Celes-tan body pillow!! Go ahead and sleep at peace alongside it!!” (Vesage)

“Take it back!!” (Haine)

This person finally stopped hiding the fact that he is a Celestis fan!

Someone has to put a brake to him sometime soon!

The other people in here are the light knights that I had gotten along with; there’s also the people of the Church, and it looks like the hostages involved in the terrorist incident came here to give a word of gratitude.

“Yorishiro-sama, you have to return to the Grand Church. The delay in the paperwork is just...!” (Mina)

“Ara, Mina-san. You are right in time to get some Yorishiro love-desu wa.” (Yorishiro)

“Stop it! Please don’t hug me! The Ates component inside of me had finally come out, and yet, at this rate, I will end up getting addicted to Yorishiro-sama! Stop it! At least don’t fondle my breasts!! And my butt too!! Aaaaahh!!” (Mina)

...

Now that I watch it in this way, the amount of acquaintances I have in the Light Church has increased by quite a lot.

The first time I came here, everyone was a stranger to me.

There’s definitely a place for me in this world. Right here, and in many other places.

Seeing this scene, I once again felt that this is a blessing and something that I should be grateful for.

